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*Headmaster, Kesav Academy ; sometime Lecturer  
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AUTHOR OF 'THE VEDANTA AND ITS RELATION TO  
MODERN THOUGHT,' 'THE PHILOSOPHY OF  
BRAHMAISM,' AND OTHER WORKS ;  
ANNOTATOR' AND TRANSLATOR  
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## DEDICATION

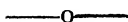
TO THE SPIRIT OF MY DEPARTED WIFE,  
SRIMATI KAPAMBINI DEVI,

*You were my 'Gītā' pupil when you married me, and these lectures on the 'Gītā' were written during your last illness, often at your bedside, bringing back, as I read them again, recollections, sad and solemn, yet dear, of incidents in that long struggle. Hence I connect them with your name.*





## PREFACE



A common admiration for the *Bhagavadgītā* seems now to bind together all educated Indians who take any interest in religion, to whatever section of the community they may belong. These lectures, which aim at a systematic and critical exposition of the philosophy of the *Gītā*, such as may commend itself to those who are trained under the current system of education, will serve, it is hoped, to deepen and widen this bond. To the writer of these lectures, this bond is a most happy augury of the progress of true religion in the country in the near future. An idea of the contents of the book will be got from the index and from the detailed summary of each lecture given at the end of the twelfth. The extant commentaries on the *Gītā*, though one or other of them is indispensable for a proper understanding of the book, do not, however, explain the philosophical doctrines implied in its teachings. While, therefore,

I have endeavoured, as much as I could, to secure their help for the reader who cannot go through them, I have explained at length the views which they only touch upon, evidently supposing them to be well-known to their readers. Even where the *Gītā* is clear, for instance where it sets forth particular *sādhana*s or spiritual exercises, a modern reader, one accustomed to order and arrangement in all that he reads, requires a systematic statement and exposition of the subject dealt with. Where he misses this in the book itself, he will find that much care has been taken in these lectures to give him the help he needs. In one other respect, these lectures may be of use to the reader. An educated Indian of the present day comes to read the *Gītā*, and in fact all the sacred books of his country, with a mind very different from that of his ancestors. His critical faculty has been fully awakened, and however reverent he may be, he cannot accept anything without proof, and if he has studied western systems of logic, philosophy and historical criticism, he cannot but look upon his scriptures, not to speak of other departments of the literature of his country, in the light of these sciences. Now, these lectures will, it is hoped, help such a reader to see what the *Gītā* means when studied by the help of the light which our education has imparted to us. It seems to the

present writer that if science and historical criticism have taken away certain things from us, those things are not comparable in value to others which they have helped to make clear and make our own for ever. The net gain of the present contact of Indian and Western systems seems to me, therefore, to be very great—nothing short of a confirmation of the fundamental teachings of our scriptures and the eradication of long-standing errors injurious to the true life of the spirit.

The writer and readers of these lectures are indebted for their preparation and publication to the deep piety and unstinted charity of the enlightened Raja of Pithapuram, whose active interest in all matters affecting the good of his country is too well known to need particular mention. A lectureship founded by him in connection with the Theological Society of the Sādhāraṇ Brāhma Samāj enabled the author to write and deliver this series. A second series is in course of delivery under the same distinguished patronage, and will, if it be the will of God, see the light next year. The author's thankfulness to his kind patron for thus helping him to deliver his God-given message to his fellow-beings, though amidst increasing difficulties caused by old age, ill-health and domestic afflictions, is too deep for expression. May the Father of all good spare this

faithful steward of his bounties and enable him to serve the cause of truth long,—long after this humble worker's feeble hands have ceased to work and his feeble voice has been hushed in eternal silence !

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## LECTURE I

### Origin and Growth of the Krishna Legend

*Om Bhúr Bhuvah Sva tat Savitur varenyam  
bhargo devasya dhímahi dhiyo yo nah prochodayát.*

Reveal thy truth to me, O Holy Spirit, and enable me to embody it in words that can touch the hearts and intellects of my hearers. Fill all hearts with reverence and open all eyes to thy saving light.

In commencing a series of lectures on the *Bhagavadgītā*, the third great *prasthānam*\* of Hindu Theism, I remember my deep debt to my teachers, both ancient and modern, eastern and western. I bow down to the composers of the *prasthānatrayam*,—the *rishis* who uttered the *Upanishads*, the *muni* who thought out the *Vedānta Sūtras*, and the *yogin* who wrote the *Gītā*. I humble myself to Āchāryas Sankara, Rāmānuja, and the other commentators of the three *prasthānas*. I make my obeisance to the leaders of the Brāhma Samāj, the society to which I have the honour to belong; and I pay my respects to those Christian

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\* Institute, lit. departure.



saints, sages and scholars to whom I owe a large part of whatever humble enlightenment I possess.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The *Bhagavadgītā* is undoubtedly the most popular of our sacred books. It is popular both in the original Sanskrit and in the modern languages into which it has been translated. It is popular not only in the country of its birth, but also in many foreign countries. It has been rendered into not only most of the vernaculars of India, but also the language of many other civilised countries in Asia and Europe. Its commentaries can be counted by hundreds, if not thousands, and Indian and foreign literature on it is continually increasing. It is *smṛiti*, tradition, and not *śruti*, revelation, and its place, therefore, according to the established mode of estimating the value of a sacred book, is distinctly below the Vedic *Sanhitas*, *Brāhmanas* and *Upanishads*, and in the estimation of philosophers, below the *Vedānta Sūtras*; but while all these are more or less confined to scholars, the *Gītā* is the common favourite of all. With the great revival of Sanskrit learning going on all round, the *Upanishads* are indeed becoming more and more popular; but in a thousand who read the *Gītā*, scarcely one perhaps reads the *Upanishads*. It is indeed commonly believed that the *Gītā* contains the quintessence of the *Upanishads*, as

appears from the following verse, which is in the mouth of every reader of the *Gītā* and forms a part of the *Vaishnaviya Tantrasāra* :

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालभन्दनः ।  
पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्धं गौतामृतं महत् ॥

That is, "The *Upanishads* are cows, the cow-herd's son, (that is, Krishna) is the milker, Prithā's son (that is Arjuna) is the calf, the wiseman is the drinker, and the nectarlike *Gītā* is the excellent milk." I have no objection to this conception of the mutual relation of the *Gītā* and the *Upanishads*, if it is rightly understood. But I fear that the right sense of the verse, at any rate the exact relation of the *Gītā* and the *Upanishads*, is wrongly understood. It seems to be thought that Krishna has once for all extracted the essence of the *Upanishads* and embodied it in the *Gītā*, and that to learn their purport we have only to read the latter and not to make an independent study of the former. But really both the calf that sucks and the milker who milks the cows are in each one of us, and we have to get the milk afresh, each one for himself. Figure apart, if we would understand the *Gītā* properly, we must study the *Upanishads* with a truth-seeking heart and interpret them with the light of the Universal Self, which is our own Higher Self, and which inspires our understandings,

—‘*dhiyo yo nah prachodayat.*’ However, the chief cause of the popularity of the *Gita* is that just noticed, namely the current belief that it was delivered as an exhortation to Arjuna, by Krishna, the incarnation of the Deity. The *Gita* has indeed its intrinsic value, without which it could not attain its world-wide popularity. Internal evidence proves it to be in most part an inspired book. But while this internal evidence appeals only to the thoughtful and the spiritually minded, in fact only to the advanced aspirant after spiritual life, the inspired character of the book is the object of belief to every orthodox Hindu. The belief is all but universal in the Hindu world that the *Gita* was uttered in the battle-field of Kurukshetra by an incarnation of God and was recorded by a contemporary of his. It is this belief in the divine origin of the *Gita*, in its being the word of God incarnate as man, that, apart from its intrinsic value, forms its principal charm, maintains its popularity, and perpetuates both its truths and errors. There are indeed various theories of incarnation current amongst us, Hindus, and as we proceed, it will be found that the present lecturer is a believer in one of those theories. But with the exception of those few who have come under the influence of the modern science of Historical Criticism, all Hindus hold that

Krishna, Arjuna and Vyása were contemporaries, and that the first uttered the teachings in the *Gita*, the second heard them and the third recorded them. Now, it is always painful to disturb long-standing beliefs, specially when deep religious feelings have wound themselves round them; but for the sake of truth—truth which, though at first bitter, is ultimately found to be really sweet and wholesome,—I must say at the very outset, as the fruit of my study of the results of modern historical research, that this universal belief of the Hindu world is without any real foundation. Krishna, Arjuna, Vyása and Kurukshetra may be, and the last most probably is, historical, but their combination is mythical and legendary, and it will be my task in this opening lecture of our present series to trace, so far as my time and humble powers will allow, the origin and growth of this legend. I need hardly say that I am not an antiquarian in any sense or degree, and have not gone into any independent research worth the name. What I shall give you, and that in very brief space, is only a summary of the results of research carried on by competent scholars. However, those of my hearers who may wish to verify these results by independent study will find sufficient references to guide them in their studies. The questions that confront us in this

connexion are the following :—(1). When was the battle of Kurukshetra fought ? (2) When and by whom was the *Mahābhārata*, of which the *Gītā* is a part, composed ? (3) Were Kṛiṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* in all its various redactions ? (4) If not, into which of them and in what period of Indian history, were they introduced ? (5) Was Kṛiṣṇa conceived as an incarnation of God from the very beginning ? or (6) Was he deified only by a slow process of development ? We shall take up these questions one by one and answer them as best we can.

The ancient history of India is, as we all know, a history without dates. With the solitary exception of the Buddhistic period, the fixing of dates in it is a mere guess-work based on more or less uncertain data. Our ancient literary history is usually divided into six periods, each occupying several centuries. The first is the Mantra Period, the period in which the Vedic hymns were composed and compiled. This period may again be divided into two sub-periods, the first being the age of the *Rigveda* and the second that of the *Sāma*, *Yajur* and *Atharva* Vedas. The *Rik* hymns were much earlier than the others both as regards their composition and compilation in the form of a *Sanhita*. This is proved both by their varying geographical data, showing that when the other Vedas were

compiled the Aryans had advanced far more towards the south and east than at the period represented by the *Rigveda*, and by the fact that except in its apparently later additions, the *Rigveda* does not mention the other Vedas, while the latter not only know, but largely borrow from the former. As to the age of the Vedas, Professor Macdonell, the most recent historian of Sanskrit literature, says: "With regard to the commencement of the Vedic age, there seems to have been a decided tendency among Sanskrit scholars to place it too high. 2000 B. C. is commonly represented as its starting point." The lower limit of this period is supposed to be about 1000 B. C. Though the compilation of the later Vedas is far removed from that of the *Rigveda*, the first subdivision of the Mantra Period may roughly be called the period of the composition of the Vedas, and the second that of their compilation. As Mr. R. C. Datta says in his *Ancient Hindu Civilisation*: (p. 10) "The central literary fact of this period was the compilation of the Vedas." As to the date of the first subdivision, Mr. Datta says: "What is the date of this period of Aryan settlements in the Panjab as pictured in the *Rigveda*? We think we agree with the general opinion on the

subject when we fix 2000 to 1400 B. C. for this period of Hindu history." Speaking of the changes that took place in the second subdivision of the Mantra Period, which Mr. Datta calls the Epic Age, he says: "Scholars have generally held that a period of at least four or five centuries was required for the great social and political changes of this epoch. The period may therefore be supposed to have extended approximately from 1400 to 1000 B. C." The period of the compilation of the later Vedas was contemporaneous with the composition of the earlier *Brāhmanas* and *Upanishads*. In fact the *Krishna Yajurveda* is a combination of *Mantra* and *Brāhmaṇa*, and it was the necessity of separating these two elements and having an unmixed or pure *Mantra Saṁhitā* that led to the compilation of the *Sukla* or pure *Yajurveda*. But as *Brāhmanas* continued to be written even after the *Sanhitās* had been finally compiled, the composition of the *Brāhmanas* and the early *Upanishads* forms a period by itself. This period is supposed to have extended from about 1000 to 500 B. C. About the lower limit of this period, Professor Macdonell says: "The lower limit of the second Vedic stratum cannot, however, be fixed later than 500 B. C., because its latest doctrines are presupposed by Buddhism,

and the date of the death of Buddha has been, with a high degree of probability, calculated, from the recorded dates of the various Buddhist councils, to be 480 B. C." The *Upanishads* assigned to this period are the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, *Chhāndogya*, *Taittirīya*, *Aitareya*, and *Kaushītaki*. After this period we come to the *Sūtra Period*, the period of aphoristic literature like the *Srauta Sūtras*, the *Grihya Sūtras*, the *Dharma Sūtras*, Yaska's *Nirukta*, Pānini's *Grammar* and the chief systems of philosophical aphorisms. To this period are also assigned the chief verse *Upanishads*, the *Īśa*, *Katha*, *Mundaka*, *Svetāsvatara* &c., as well as the canonical books of the Buddhist and Jaina systems. Speaking of the *Sūtras*, Professor Macdonell says: "Research, it is true, has hitherto failed to arrive at any definite result as to the date of their composition. Linguistic investigations, however, tend to show that the *Sūtras* are closely connected in time with the Grammarian Pānini, some of them appearing to be considerably anterior to him. We shall therefore probably not go very far wrong in assigning 500 and 200 B.C. as the chronological limits within which the *Sūtra* literature was developed." As to Pānini, the Professor elsewhere speaks of him as "belonging probably to the middle of the *Sūtra Period*" (p. 39). and to "the end of



the fourth century B.C." (p.22). The next period is called the Dharmaśāstra Period, the period in which the chief metrical lawbooks such as those of Manu, Yājñavalkya and Nārada were written. It dates from about B. C. 200 to A. D. 500. The *Dharma Śāstras* are based on the *Dharma Sūtras*, but they took time to take their present shapes. Of the *Mānava Dharma Śāstra*, Professor Macdonell says: "The most important and earliest of the metrical Smritis is the *Mānava Dharma Śāstra* or *Code of Manu*, not improbably based on a *Mānava Dharma Sūtra*. It is closely connected with the *Mahābhārata*, of which three books alone (iii, xii & xvi) contain as many as 260 of its 2684 *slokas*." It probably assumed its present shape not much later than 200 A. D." Of *Yājñavalkya*, the same writer says: "Its approximate date seems to be about 350 A.D." And of *Nārada*: "His date is probably 500 A. D." To the Dharma Śāstra Period are also assigned the chief of the *Atharvan Upaniṣhads*, the *Prasna*, *Māndūkya* &c. and such sectarian Upanishads as the *Grāmī Tāpaniya*, the *Rāma Tāpaniya* and the *Nrisinha Tāpaniya*. The next period is the Puranic, the one in which the *Purānas* in their present forms were composed. It belongs rather to our later literary history and has no direct concern with the subject of our present inquiry.

After this rather long discussion, we are now prepared to take up the first of the questions proposed by us,—that of the date of the Kurukshetra War. It is remarkable that while our later literature is full of it, it finds no mention in any Vedic work, from the *Rigveda* to the *Upanishads*. The *Rigveda*, in its seventh *mandala*, 83rd *sukta*, speaks of a great battle on the banks of the Parushni in which Sudás, King of the Tritsus, fought against and defeated a coalition of ten kings. This battle is mentioned in other parts of the *Rigveda* also, for instance in iii. 33 and vii. 33. Some of the tribes mentioned as taking part in the battle are the same as are named in the *Mahābhārata*, but the Kurus and the Páñchālas, the principal parties in the war as described in the epic, are, in the *Rigveda* narration, conspicuous by their absence. In fact the Páñchālas are not mentioned at all in the *Rigveda* and “the name of the Kurus is only found there,” as Prof. Macdonell says, “indirectly in two or three compounds or derivatives.” Besides, the scene of the battle referred to is far removed to the West from Kurukshetra, where the *Mahābhārata* war is said to have taken place. For these reasons, no scholar seems to think that it is this battle, fought in the dim past of Indian history, that supplied the original material for the conception and narration

of the great war in the *Mahābhārata*. We shall however find later on an eminent American scholar locating the original epic in the Panjab. However, though the war is not mentioned in Vedic works, the name of the chief parties, the Kurus and the Pāñchālas, and even the names of some individual Kurus, occur in the *Yajurveda* and some of the *Brāhmanas*. Prof. Macdonell (P. 156) says that the Kurus "are first referred to in the White *Yajurveda*." Elsewhere (p. 174) he says: "The geographical data of all the rescensions of the *Yajurveda* point to the territory in the middle of Northern India occupied by the neighbouring peoples of the Kurus and Pāñchālas. The country of the former, called Kurukshetra, is specifically the holy land of the *Yajurvedas* and of the *Brāhmanas* attached to them." Speaking of the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* attached to the *Sukla Yajurveda*, the same writer says: "If we inquire as to how far the legends of our *Brāhmaṇa* contain the germs of the later epic tales, we find that there is indeed some slight connection. Janmejaya, the celebrated king of the Kurus in the *Mahābhārata*, is mentioned here for the first time.\* The Pāndus,

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\* In verifying this statement, I find that Janmejaya is mentioned in the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* as Pārikshita Janmejaya, that is, Janmejaya, the son of Pārikshita, so that instead of one, we get in the *Brāhmaṇa* the names of two of the personages mentioned in the epic, though no mention whatever of the war itself.

however, who proved victorious in the epic war, are not to be met with in this any more than in the other *Brāhmaṇas*; and Arjuna, the name of their chief, is still an appellation of Indra. But as the epic Arjuna is a son of Indra, his origin is doubtless to be traced to this epithet of Indra." (p. 216). Speaking of the historical basis of the *Mahābhārata* story, Prof. Macdonell says in another place:—"There can be little doubt that the original kernel of the epic has as a historical background an ancient conflict between the two neighbouring tribes of the Kurus and Pāṇchālas, who finally coalesced into a single people. In the *Yajurvedas* these two tribes already appear united, and in the *Kāthaka*, King Dhritarāshtra Vaichitra-virya, one of the chief figures of the *Mahābhārata*, is mentioned as a well-known person. Hence the historical germ of the great epic is to be traced to a very early period, which cannot well be later than the tenth century B. C." (p. 284, 85.)

Now, we should perhaps be satisfied with this general indication of the period in which the war took place. But Mr. R. C. Datta goes farther and endeavours to fix approximately the century, if not the very year, in which the battle was fought. I shall here quote what he says on the subject, leaving you to judge for yourself the historical value of his conclusion. Mr. Datta says :

"Tradition has it that when the Vedas were compiled, the position of the solstitial points was observed and recorded to mark the date. The jyotisha in which this observation is now found, is a late work, not earlier than the third century before Christ, but the observation was certainly made at an ancient date, and Bentley and Archdeacon Pratt—both able Mathematicians—have gone over the calculation and found that it was made in 1181 B.C. Much has been written of late against the value of this discovery in Europe, America and India, but we have found nothing in these discussions which goes against the genuineness of the astronomical observation. We are inclined to believe that the observation marks approximately the true date of the final compilation of the Vedas, and as the work of compilation occupied numerous teachers for generations together, we may suppose that the Vedas were compiled during the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B. C. And this date falls within the period we have assigned for the second epoch. Next, with regard to the Kuru-Páncála war. The annals of different kingdoms in India allude to this ancient war, and some of these annals are not unreliable. The founder of Buddhism lived in the sixth century B. C. and we learn from the annals of Magadha that thirty-five kings reigned between the Kuru-

Páñchála war and the time of Buddha. Allowing twenty years to each reign, this would place the war in the thirteenth century B. C. Again, we know from coins that Kaniksha ruled in Kashmira in the first century A. D., and his successor Abhimanyu probably reigned towards the close of that century. The historian of Kashmira informs us that fifty-two kings reigned for 1226 years from the time of the Kuru-Páñchála war to the time of Abhimanyu, and this would place the war in the twelfth century B. C. We do not ask the reader to accept any of the particular dates given above. It is almost impossible to fix any precise date in the history of India before Alexander the Great visited the land, and we may well hesitate, even when astronomical calculations point to a particular year or historical lists point to a particular century. All that we ask, and all that we are entitled to ask, is that the reader will now find it possible to accept the fact that the Vedas were finally compiled and the Kuru-Páñchála war was fought sometime about the thirteenth century or the twelfth century B.C."

• We now come to discuss the date of the composition of the *Mahabharata*. Those who have no first hand acquaintance with the book, but know of it only from hearsay or from such vernacular compendiums as Kāśīdāsa's, usually think of it as

a single undivided work and the production of a single author. But even a superficial study of the book in the original Sanskrit or in a literal translation is enough to show to the unbiased reader that it is the work of many hands, the product of many ages, and a conglomeration of ill-joined and ill-arranged parts. Vyása is said to be its author. But where is Vyása in the book? It begins with the statement that while Saunaka and other rishis were offering a great *yajna* in the Naimisha forest, Ugrasravá, the great Pauranika or story-teller, arrived there and at Sauráka's request recited the *Mahábhārata* as he had heard it from Vaisampáyana, who had heard it from Vyása. Ugrasravá, then, would seem to be the speaker throughout the whole narration. But the person who speaks of Ugrasravá, Vaisampáyana and Vyása cannot be any one of them, and it is he, it would seem, who is the real writer, at any rate the last redactor of the *Mahábhārata*. No one can say who this writer or redactor is. Then, no one knows, not even the book itself, where the *Mahábhārata* really begins. The first chapter of the book is called the *Anukramanikādhya*, the chapter of contents, and gives a brief summary of them. Now, such summaries are to be found in other parts of the book also, and show, perhaps more clearly than anything else, how the original narrative, whoever

may have been its author, have been tempered with and added to by various later writers. However, in this first summary it is said that some consider the first verse, some the beginning of the *Āstika Parva*, and some the story of Rājā Uparichara as the beginning of the *Mahābhārata*. But in fact this last beginning seems as little the real beginning as the other two. The only difference is that while in the earlier parts Ugrasrayā is said to be the direct speaker, in this and the following parts the speaker, as introduced by Ugrasravā, is Vaisampāyana, the hearers being Rājā Janmejaya, Arjuna's great-grandson, and his priests and courtiers. Vyāsa, Janmejaya's natural great-great-grandfather, of course survives all his progeny and is present at the snake sacrifice and listens to his disciple's recitation of his own work! Vaisampāyana, in the course of his narration, is represented as saying that Vyāsa taught his *Mahābhārata* to his pupils, Sumantu, Jaimini, Paila and Vaisampāyana, and to his own son, Suka, and that each of them published a distinct *Sanhita* or compilation of the *Mahābhārata*. Do my hearers catch the significance of this statement? The original *Mahābhārata* by Vyāsa goes as far from us as possible. No one can say what it was. The *Mahābhārata* we



read is plainly said to be only one of several versions of the story, as originally told by Vyása, and it is written neither by Vaisampáyana nor by Ugrasravá, but by an unknown writer or number of writers who speak to us about them.

But the present *Mahābhārata* is not without faint traces of the bulk and contents of the original poem or collection of poems. In the opening chapter already referred to, it is said that the *Bhārata Saṁhitá* (as the book is therein called) as originally composed by Vyása, consisted of 24000 *slokas* and that in this form it did not include the episodes. Vyása is then said to have added to the original poem, so that it grew into sixty *lakhs* of *slokas* of which only one *lakh* exist on the earth. In the second chapter, called the *Parva Sangraha*, the enumeration of *parvas* or chapters, the number of *slokas* enumerated is 84,836. But the actual number found in the current rescensions of the poem, including the supplementary portion called the *Harivansa*, is 107,390. The statement in the first chapter, then, of the poem containing a hundred thousand *slokas*, must have been made long after the actual enumeration of *slokas* in the second, and the reference to the supplementary parts in the second chapter must also be of the nature of an addition or interpolation. However, in the light of these statements in the

poem itself, we find in it three distinct strata, successive in their origin. But European orientalists are by no means satisfied that the first of these three, namely that which is said to have contained 24000 *slokas*, was really the first. In the first chapter there is a statement that there are 8800 *slokas* in the book which no one except Vyása and Suka can fully understand, which even Sanjaya (the all-seeing messenger by whom the incidents of the battle were daily reported to Dhritaráshtra) can scarcely understand. This statement is interpreted by these orientalists as meaning that the poem, in its original form, contained only 8800 *slokas*. If this interpretation is right, there seem to be four, instead of three, strata in the poem as it has come down to us,—the first containing 8800 *slokas*, the second 24000, the third 84,836, and the fourth and last 107,390. The question of the date of the poem therefore resolves itself into the question, at what date was each of these four strata composed ?

Now, the earliest mention of the *Mahabharata* in our literature occurs in Ásvaláyana's *Grihya Sûtras*, III. 4. 4, where the poem as well as some of its early compilers are named in the course of an enumeration of teachers and their works. Thus the first form of the poem may be traced to the earlier part of the *Sûtra* period. There are indeed

references in the *Brāhmanas* and the *Upanishads* of a class of literature called *Itihāsa Purāṇa*, which probably consisted of old heroic songs some of which perhaps described the Kuru-Pāṇchāla war. These may very well have formed the materials of which the earliest form of our poem was composed. "To the period of this original epic doubtless belong," says Professor Macdonell, "the traces the *Mahābhārata* has preserved unchanged of the heroic spirit, and the customs of ancient times, so different from the later state of things which the *Mahābhārata* as a whole reflects. To this period also belongs the figure of Brahmā as the highest God. The evidence of Pali literature shows that Brahmā already occupied that position in Buddha's time. We may then perhaps assume that the original form of our epic came into being about the fifth century B. C."

The second form of the poem, that in which it is said to have contained twenty-four thousand *slokas*, seems to have been composed much later in the same period. One of the marks of the later origin of this form is the introduction of Siva and Vishnu, specially the latter, with Krishna as his incarnation, on a level with Brahmā, who was the highest God in the earlier part of the period. As to this mark of lateness, and another, the mention of the Greeks and the Buddhists,

Professor Macdonell says : "We gather from the account of Megasthenes, that about 300 B. C. these two gods were already prominent, and the people were divided into Saivaites and Vishnuites. Moreover, the Yavanas or Greeks are mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* as allies of the Kurus, and even the Sakas (Scythians) and Pahlavas (Parthians) are mentioned along with them ; Hindu temples are also referred to as well as Buddhist relic mounds. Thus an extension of the original epic must have taken place after 300 B. C. and by the beginning of our era."

The third and fourth strata of the poem seem to have been added in the period we have called the Dharma Śāstra Period, that extending from B. C. 200 to A. D. 500. That it had assumed its present form before the latter date, is, however, proved by the clearest evidence. I again quote from Professor Macdonell, who says : "There is an inscription in a land grant dating from 462 A. D. or at the latest 532 A. D., which proves incontrovertibly that the epic about 500 A. D. was practically of exactly the same length as it is stated to have in the survey of contents (*Anukramanikā*) given in Bk. I. and as it actually has now.... There are also several land grants dated between 450 and 500 A. D. and found in various parts of India, which quote the *Mahābhārata* as an

author<sup>ty</sup> teaching' the rewards 'of pious donors and the punishments of impious despoilers. This shows that in the middle of the fifth century it already possessed the same character as at present, that of a *smṛiti* or *dharmaśāstra*."

Before taking up the question of authorship, I shall add the weighty opinion of Professor E. A. Hopkins (of Yale University), author of the *Great Epic of India*, on the dates of the different *strata* of the *Mahābhārata*. In the extract I make from his book, there are also references to our third and fourth questions, those about the place of Krishna and the Pāṇḍavas in the poem. I take the extract from the concluding remarks of the book. The Professor says: "The Pāṇḍu epic, as we have it, represents a period subsequent not only to Buddhism, 500 B. C., but to the Greek invasion, 300 B. C. Buddhistic supremacy already decadent is implied by the passages which allude contemptuously to the *edukas* or Buddhist monuments as having ousted the temples of the gods....The present epic, if it records anything historical, records the growth of a great power in Hindūstan, a power that could not have arisen before Buddhistic supremacy without leaving a trace of the mighty name of Pāṇḍu in the early literature. There is no such trace. Moreover, even the idea of such a power as our epic depicts

was unknown before the great empire that arose under Buddhism. For this reason it is impossible to explain the Pándu realm described in the epic as an allegory of the 5th century, for we cannot have an allegory in unknown terms. The Pándus, be it remembered, rule all India, and the limits of their empire, as geographically defined in the epic, far surpass the pre-Asocan imagination, as it is reflected in the literature. Even Manu has no idea of an empire. His king is a petty raj... Putting these facts together with those gleaned from other works than the epic itself, we may tentatively assume as approximate dates of the whole work in its different stages : Bhárata (Kuru) lays, perhaps combined into one, but with no evidence of an epic before 400 B.C. A Mahá-bhárata tale with Pándu heroes, lays and legends combined by the Puranic diaskeuasts, Krishna as a demi-god (no evidence of didactic form or of Krishna's divine supremacy), 400-200 B. C. The making of the epic with Krishna as all-god, intrusion of masses of didactic matter, addition of Puranic material, old and new, multiplication of exploits, 200 B. C. to 100-200 A.D. The last books added with the introduction to the first book, the swollen Anusásan separated from Santi and recognised as a separate book, 200 to 400 A. D.; and finally 400 A. D. : occasional amplifications....

such as &c....In the case of these more precise dates there is only reasonable probability. They are and must be provisional till we know more than we know now. But certain are these four facts, 1, that the Páandu epic, as we have it, or even without the masses of didactic material, was composed or compiled after the Greek invasion ; 2, that this epic only secondarily developed its present masses of didactic material ; 3, that it did not become a specially religious propaganda of Krishnáism (in the accepted sense of that sect of Vaishnanavas) till the first century B. C. ; 4, that the epic was practically completed by 200 A. D. ; 5, that there is no "date of the epic" which will cover all its parts (though handbook-makers may safely assign it in general to the second century B. C.)"

Now, we have already seen that the *Mahābhārata* bear unmistakable traces of being the work of many hands, and that its relation to Krishna Dvaipáyana or Veda Vyása, even if such a person ever existed, is more legendary than anything else. That there was a sage named Krishna who was born in an island in the Jumna in the way related in the poem, and that he helped in the compilation and division of the Vedas—only helped in the task and did not do it alone, for it was too hard a task to have been done by any one man—

there is indeed nothing impossible in all this. That he left the nucleus of a poem on the great war to his disciples, may also be true. But beyond the mere tradition that there was such a person and that he had something to do with the poem in its first form, there is no proof, properly so called, of even this much, and that the successive additions to the poem, additions made from age to age, could not be the work of one hand, is quite clear. That the *Gītā* is one of the latest of these additions, we have already seen, and this will become more evident as we proceed. Vyása's authorship of the *Gītā* is therefore not only an unfounded tradition, but an impossibility. That all the great commentators on the lay speak of him as its author, shows only the utter absence of the historic sense in them. About a thousand years lie between the great war and the composition of the *Gītā*. As we have seen, the war took place in the latter part of the Mantra period, when the Vedic hymns were in the process of being compiled or had just been compiled. But the *Gītā* cannot have been composed earlier than the Dharma-Sástra period, which, as we have seen, began about 200 B. C. This is proved both by negative and positive evidence. By negative evidence, I mean the fact that the *Gītā*, which has had such a wide and deep influence on



our national character and literature in comparatively recent times, is not even mentioned in any work belonging to the first four periods of our literary history—the Mantra, Bráhmaṇ, Upāṇishad and Sūtra periods. The positive evidence consists in the fact that not only are the ideas found in the *Gītā* such as could be entertained only by a writer deeply read in the literature of the periods mentioned, but that all classes of that literature are distinctly mentioned by him. The three Vedic *Sanhitās* and the religion inculcated in them are not only well-known to him, but his dissatisfaction with rites and ceremonies as such, his tirade against *kāma-karma*, interested action, and his insistence on offering the sacrifices with one's thoughts and feelings all resting on Brahman, show how far he was, both in spirit and in point of time, from the Vedic religion properly so called. The *Bráhmaṇas* seem to be referred to by him in xviii. 23, “ब्राह्मणास्तेन वेदाश्च यज्ञाश्च विहिताः पुरा ।” As to the *Upāṇishads*, their spirit breathes throughout the whole book—the theology, the ethical and spiritual ideal, and the leading *sādhans* or spiritual exercises prescribed—all being identical with those taught in them. *Slokas* from the verse *Upāṇishads*, the *Katha* and the *Svetāsvatara*, some of them slightly modified, are found in ii. 11, 12 ; iii. 42 ; viii. 11 ; xiii. 13, 14 ; and xv. 1. Even the whole setting

of the poem,—Krishna, the Supreme Self, driving the chariot of Arjuna, the individual self, seems to have been borrowed from the third *valli* of the first chapter of the *Katha*. The *Upanishads* ( or the system of thought implied in them ) are mentioned as *Vedānta* in xv. 15 : “वेदान्तकृद् वेदविदेवचाहम् ।” The *Brahmasūtras*, either in their present or some previous form, are clearly referred to in xiii. 4,—‘ब्रह्मसूत्रपदैरेव हेतुमङ्गिर्विनिश्चितैः’। Familiarity with the Sankhyā and the Vedānta as systems of thought, in however crude and undeveloped forms, is implied throughout the whole book. One of them or perhaps both together are referred to in xviii. 13,—‘सांख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्माणाम्’, and their reputed founders, Kapila and Vyāsa, have become objects of such universal reverence at the time, that they are thought fit to be mentioned in chapter x. as *vibhūtis* or manifestations of the Supreme Being : “सिद्धानां कपिलो मुनिः”, ‘मुनीनामप्यहं व्यासः’। The *Dharmasūtras*, if not the metrical *Dharmasāstras*, seem to be referred to, besides elsewhere, in xvi. 24,—

‘तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणान्ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ’।

Thus we see that the *Gītā*, which is commonly believed to be the utterance of Krishna at the field of Kurukshetra, at a battle which was fought in the Mantra period of our history, really comes down to a time which cannot be earlier than the

beginning of the Dharmasāstra period, that is, a little before or after the beginning of the Christian era. It is the period of the *Atharvan* and the *Sāṃpradāyika* or sectarian Upanishads, and, in fact the main trend of thought in these latter class of Upanishads,—the setting up of a particular historical or mythical hero as the incarnation of God in a special sense,—is so identical with that of the *Gītā*, that this fact itself seems sufficient to prove the book to be the product of the same movement that produced these sectarian Upanishads. This line of thought is conspicuous by its absence from all classes of our older literature. The germ of the doctrine of incarnation is or is supposed to be found in the *Mantras* themselves. Vāmadeva in the *R̥gveda*, iv. 26. 1, says, “मनुश्चैव सूर्यश्चाहम्”—“I became Manu, and I became Sūrya.” This germ is found in a somewhat developed form in the *Upanishads*, where the fundamental identity of the divine and the human self is taught everywhere. In the *Kaushītaki Upanishad*, the individual self's consciousness of this identity is illustrated by the story of Indra, and Pratardana. In the *Brahma Sūtras* this thought takes a systematic form. So far, however, it is a doctrine of universal incarnation. Each individual self is taught as fundamentally the same as the Universal Self, and spiritual exercises

are laid down, which, if gone through, will enable every one to be conscious of this identity, and say '*Aham Brahmasmi*'—'I am Brahman', and '*So'ham*'—'I am he.' But no particular person is pointed to as having attained permanently to this consciousness and lived and moved in it. Much less is it taught that the eternally perfect Absolute Self, who has no *sādhans* to go through, becomes incarnate in an individual, but nevertheless retains his perfections. This doctrine of special incarnation appears for the first time in our national thought in the period referred to; and the *Gītā*, as the most remarkable embodiment of the doctrine, seems clearly to be the product of this period.

We now take up our third and fourth questions,—whether Krishna and the Pándavas were mentioned in all redactions of the *Mahābhārata*, and if not, into which of them they were introduced. Some European antiquarians think that the first stratum of the *Mahābhārata* contained no mention of Krishna and the Pándavas, that it was a narration of the war between the Kurús and the Páñchálas and not what the later strata have become,—an account of the feuds between two branches of the Kuru family leading to a war between them, in which the Páñchálas were mere allies. The Pándavas are supposed to have

been a non-aryan people living in the northern confines of the country. Early Buddhist literature is said to mention them. They were perhaps identical with or similar to the modern Thibetans with their peculiar custom of brothers marrying a common wife. They may have formed a party in the war as related in the earliest war-songs and given occasion for the later conception of the five sons of Pándu with their common wife, Krishná Draupadi, who, according to the scholars referred to, are pure fictions,—creations of poetic imagination. The poet's account of the miraculous birth of Draupadi and of her five husbands lends colour to this theory and seems to show that the poet himself had scarcely any intention of disguising the fact that these persons were creations of his fancy. The late Mr. R. C. Datta shared in this view of the fictitious character of the five Pándavas and their common wife and sets it forth clearly in chap. ii. bk ii. of his *Ancient Hindu Civilisation* (latest edition). However, the motive that led later poets to imagine these persons, make them the chief figures in the poem, and bring in Krishna to be their friend and constant adviser, is said to be the establishment of the divinity and worship of Krishna and the inculcation of the moral that devotion to Krishna leads to victory and prosperity. Now, since this theory was first propound-

ed, by Professor Weber, I believe, much has been written for and against it, but it does not seem that there are any clear data on which a decisive opinion on the matter may be founded. Professor Macdonell, whom I have so often quoted, thinks that the Pándavas were perhaps even in the first form of the poem, though their characters were much changed in the second form. That there was however a religious motive—the bringing of Krishna into prominence—in all that is said of him in the poem, is admitted by the professor. Professor Hopkins thinks that in the ‘pseudo-epic,’ the name he gives to the later or Pándu epic, the Pándus have taken the place of the Bháratas in the original epic. The Bháratas were an ancient tribe mentioned in the *Rigveda* as opposed to Sudás and his Tritsus. Professor Macdonell thinks “they were doubtless absorbed in what came to be called the Kuru nation.” (p. 156) Now, referring to the Pándavas’ polyandry, Professor Hopkins says: “It is known that polyandry was no uncommon thing on the borders of Brahmanic civilization, and Buhler recognized the custom within its pale; while the Pándus have no Brahmanic standing, and are evidently a new people from without the pale.” (p. 376). Professor Hopkins further thinks, as I have already mentioned, that the epic arose first in the Punjab and

travelled south-east. Referring to a confusion made in the later epic between 'Váhika' and 'Báhlika,' the former a Punjab clan, and the latter the Bactrians, he says: "It is possible that the epic arose further to the north-west, and in its south-eastern journey, for it ends in being revised in the south-east, has transferred the attributes of one people to another, as it has transferred geographical statements, and made seven Sarasvatis out of the seven rivers of antiquity, ix. 38,3. As an indication of the earlier habitat may be mentioned the very puzzling remark made in iii. 34, 11. Here there is an apparent allusion to the agreement in ii. 76, which agreement is that on being recognized before the expiration of the thirteenth year, either party shall give up his kingdom (*svarājyam*, sl. 14), and it is assumed throughout that the two kingdoms are those of Hastinapur on the Ganges and Indraprastha on the Jumna. But in the passage of Vana just referred to there is an (old) *trīśatubh* resumé of the situation, which makes the Kuru say :

‘ब्रवीमि सत्यं कुरुसंसदीह  
तवैव ता भारत पञ्चनद्यः’ ।

Here we get an account where the Pándus are lost in the older Bháratas, and to them the Kuru king says 'If we break this agreement, yours shall be all this Punjab.' But what has the Punjab to

do with the epic in its present form ? It is a land of Váhikas and generally despised peoples (who morally are not much better than barbarians), and also a holy land, but whatever it is morally, it has nothing to do politically with the present epic heroes, except to provide them with some of their best allies, a fact, however, that in itself may be significant of earlier Western relations." I may remark in passing that the mention of the *Mahābhārata* in the *Asvalāyana Grihya Sūtras* is considered by Professor Hopkins as an interpolation. I have verified and examined the reference, and Prof. Hopkins' doubt seems to me well-founded. But this does not affect our conclusion that the first form of the poem belongs to the fifth century B.C.

Coming now to the second form of the poem, that containing twenty-four thousand *slokas*, we find, on very clear evidence, that the five Pándavas and Krishna too had a place in it. This evidence is supplied by the *Sūtras* of Pánini and Patanjali's commentary on them. As I have already shown by a quotation from Professor Macdonell, Pánini's date is now generally admitted to be the middle of the Sūtra period. No scholar would now put him, as Goldstucker did, before the *Brāhmanas*. Max Muller assigns him to the fourth century B. C. In his Gifford Lectures on *Physical*



*Religion*, he says, "That there were ancient and modern *Bráhmaṇas*, we know from unimpeachable authorities of the fourth century B. C., for instance, the great 'grammarian Pánini.'" Professor Bhandarkar, in his article on the *Mahābhārata* in the *Indian Antiquary* of November, 1872, thinks it probable that Patanjali lived during the reign of Pushpamitra, which extended from 178 to 142 B. C. Now, Pánini mentions Vāsudeva and Arjuna together in iv. 3. 98, and Yudhishtira in viii. 3. 95. The former *sūtra* runs thus,—“वासुदेवाञ्जुनाभ्यां वुन्”, that is to say, the affix वुन् is added to 'Vāsudeva' and 'Arjuna' to form the words “वासुदेवक” and “अञ्जनक,” meaning worshippers of Vāsudeva and Arjuna. Professor Bhandarkar takes this as a proof of Pánini's knowledge of Krishna and Arjuna, and even of their friendship, since their names are thus conjoined. But a younger scholar, Babu Vijaychandra Majumdar, B. L., who has lately been rising into prominence as an antiquarian, points out in an article in the *Ashāra* number of the *Pravāsi* of 1313, that the 'Vāsudeva' and 'Arjuna' of this *sūtra* cannot refer either to Krishna Vāsudeva or to Arjuna, the son of Pāṇdu. 'Vāsudeva', as the name of a god, (the first person of the Pancharātra चतुर्विह, Vāsudeva, Sankarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha) had come down from a former age,

an age when Krishna was unknown, and Arjuna, as we find in the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, was another name for Indra under which this god was worshipped. 'Vāsudeva' indeed, a name for God, existed long before 'Vasudeva', said to have been Krishna's father, was conceived by the poets, thus illustrating, in a peculiar sense, the English poet's epigrammatic line, 'The child is father of the man.' Now, as there never were any worshippers of Arjuna, the warrior, the *sūtra* in question clearly refers to the god Arjuna and not to the warrior. This is also evident from another *sūtra*, 'गोत्रक्षत्रियाख्येभ्यो बुङ्' which means that बुङ् and not बुन् should be affixed to the words when they are names of Kshatriyas. While this *sūtra* seems to prove that Vāsudeva and Arjuna were known as Kshatriyas in Pānini's time, it leaves it doubtful if the Kshatriya Vāsudeva (not mentioned as Krishna in Pānini) was recognized even as a god—not to say as the Supreme Being—in Pānini's time. From the third *āhnika*, third *pāda*, second chapter, of Patanjali's commentary, it would seem that, even in his time Krishna's divinity was far from being generally admitted. As an illustration of the use of the seventh case-ending in the locative case, the commentator gives the sentence, 'असाधुर्मातुले कृष्णः', that is, Krishna was unjust to his maternal uncle, referring of course to

Krishna's assassination of Kansa. • Such a strong epithet as 'असाधुः' could not be applied to Krishna if he had already been recognised as God, or even as a minor deity. This is confirmed by what is said in the same commentary to have happened when dramatic performances representing Krishna's assassination of Kansa took place; for it is stated that on those occasions, 'केचित् कृष्णभक्ता भवन्ति, केचित् कंसभक्ता भवन्ति'—"some felt drawn to Krishna and some to Kansa,"—proving that the former, in popular estimation, was nothing more than the latter, that is, only a great warrior, and not a deity. Nor is there anything in Patanjali, not to speak of Pānini, to show conclusively that in his day Krishna had been conceived as associated with the Pāndavas and to have taken part in the Kurukshetra war. It will be remembered that even in the present form of the poem, Krishna comes in only after Draupadī has been won by the Pāndavas and taken to their temporary lodgings in the Pānc̥hāla capital. Before that time he is represented as personally unknown to them. It is therefore only in the third and fourth forms of the great epic that we have got Krishna and the Pāndavas in their fully developed forms, the former as an incarnation of the Deity and the latter as his friends and devotees, the former helping the latter in putting an end to an iniquitous reign and

establishing the kingdom of righteousness. I may note here that the late Babu Bankimchandra Chattopádhyáya, who, in his *Krishna Charitra*, ignores the first stratum of the *Mahābhārata* and to whom our second, third, and fourth strata are respectively the first, second and third, admits that Krishna's divinity was not clearly recognised in the first stratum, that it was so recognised in the second, and that the *Gītā* belongs to the third, that is our fourth, stratum. Now, it will be seen that in answering our third and fourth questions, we have already answered in part our fifth and sixth, namely, whether Krishna's divinity was recognised in the *Mahābhārata* from the beginning, or his deification was the result of a process of development. But we shall take it up again and treat it as fully as we can. The Krishna legend goes back to the *Rigveda*. We meet with two Krishnas there. The first is a Rishi, of the family of Angiras. He is the composer of the 86th Sukta of the 8th Mandala. The other is spoken of in the eighth Mandala, 96th Sukta, 13th to 15th verses, as a non-aryan chief waiting with an army of ten thousand men on the banks of the Ansumati to give battle to Indra, who falls on him and vanquishes him. Now, it seems to me that these two Rigvedic Krishnas, the one an Aryan and the other a Non-aryan, but both more or less legendary, are the real

origin of the later Krishna legend. We shall see as we proceed, how their characters are combined, reproduced and gradually developed in the full Krishna figure appearing in our subsequent epic and religious poetry. However, we do not meet with Krishna elsewhere in the Vedas till we come to the *Bráhmāna* and *Upanishad* literature, where in the *Chhāndogya* we find the Angirasa Krishna re-appearing in a fuller form. One might expect to find something about Krishna in the *Satapatha Bráhmāna* of the Sukla Yajurvedis, among whom the *Mahābhārata* epic arose in later times. But one misses him there. There is, however, a story in it, not indeed of Krishna, but of Vishnu, whom Krishna latterly incarnated, rising into prominence and thereby exciting Indra's jealousy. In the first chapter of the fourteenth part, we are told how Vishnu, by his sacrifices, rose to power, and stood with his bow and arrow threatening the other gods, when Indra induced a number of ants to cut off his bow-string, by which Vishnu's head was severed from his trunk. Now, these Vedic myths about the struggle between Krishna and Indra, and the deadly jealousy between Vishnu and the latter seem to have contributed to the formation of the Puranic legend in which we are told how, at Brindában, when the Gopas were making preparations for worshipping Indra, Krishna induced them

not to worship that god, and thereby brought down his wrath on the people in the form of incessant rain, from which Krishna protected the Gopas by holding the hill, Gobardhana, over their heads. However, going back to the *Rigveda*, we find that Puru, Yadu, Turvasu, Anu and Druhyu, who, in the *Mahābhārata* and the Puranas figure as sons of king Yayāti and ancestors of Krishna and the Kuravas, are really names of ancient tribes who, at any rate some of them, seem to have been non-aryans. They were among Sudās's opponents, who in the seventh *mandala*, 83rd *sukta*, 7th verse, are called "दशराजानः समिता अयज्यः" "a coalition of ten kings who did not sacrifice to the gods." The writer of the *Mahābhārata* story of Yayāti seems to have had some idea that in his heroes he was dealing with non-aryans or mixed races, for he says (at the end of the 85th chapter of the Ādi Parva) that from Yadu were descended the Yādavas, from Turvasu the Yavanas, from Druhya the Bhojas, from Anu the Mlechchhas, and from Puru, who lent his youth to his father, came down the Pauravas, the ancestors of the Kurus. That the Yādavas were low-born Kshatriyas, is a tradition accepted even by the Vishnuites, and they find in their Lord's honouring that dishonourable clan by being born in it a proof of his gracious condescension. The real fact, however, seems to be

that originally they were not Kshatriyas at all, but non-aryan tribes who, in some remote period of our history, embraced the Vedic religion, formed alliances with the Aryans, and were thus gradually incorporated with the latter, not, however, without introducing some of their traditions, customs and practices among their betters. The story of Yayāti's marriage with Devayānī, the daughter of Sukra, the priest of the Asuras, that of Rájá Uparichara, who married Giriká, said to have been the daughter of a hill, which perhaps means a hill chief, and that of Sántanu, who married Satyavatí, daughter of Uparichara by a female fish, which perhaps we are to take as a fish-woman,—all seem to confirm this statement. It will also be confirmed by much of what I shall say later on. I shall leave this part of our discussion by only pointing out, on Babu Vijaychandra Mazumdár's authority, that the 'Panchajanáh' of the *Rigveda* are interpreted by some scholars as these five peoples, the Yadus, Turvasus, Purus, Anus and Druhyus, and that the name of Krishna's war-conch, 'Páñchajanya', seems to represent their coalition into a common nation or federation.

Coming now to the *Chhandogya Upanishad*, we find Krishna mentioned in it as the disciple of Ghora Angirasa. This statement seems to have played such an important part in the growth of

later legends about Krishna, that I transcribe it here in full. Having given an account of the Purusha Yajna, that is, a meditation on man in the analogy of a sacrifice, the author of the *Chhandogya* says:—

“तद्दे तद्घोर आङ्गिरसः कृणाय देवकीपुत्रायोक्तोवाचापिपास एव  
स बभूव सोऽन्तवेलायामेतत् वयं प्रतिपद्येतादितमस्यचतुर्तमसि प्राणसंशित-  
मसीति । तदैते हे ऋचौ भवतः ॥ आदित् प्रवस्य रेतसः उदयं तमसस्परि  
ज्योतिः पश्यन्त उत्तरं स्वः पश्यन्त उत्तरं देवं देवता \* सूर्यमगन्म ज्योति-  
रुत्तममिति ज्योतिरुत्तममिति ॥” ३।१।२, ३ ।

That is, “Ghōṛā, of the family of Angirasa, having communicated this to Krishna, son of Devakī, who, on hearing it, lost all desire for any other philosophy, said to him, “At the time of death one should take refuge in, that is, recite, these three *mantras*, ‘Thou art imperishable, thou art unchangeable, thou art the subtle *prana*.’ And on this subject there are these two *riks* :—‘Of the eternal seed they see the day-like light which shines in the Effulgent. Perceiving above darkness, the higher light within the heart, we reached the bright divine source of energy, the sun, the highest light, yea, the highest light.’” The three *yajus*, and the two *rik mantras* quoted here are of course to be interpreted in the light of the monistic theology of the *Upanishads*. However, we see in this extract how Krishna, son of Devakī, came to be thought of in later times as



an expounder of the theology of the *Upanishads*. For aught we know, the disciple of Angiras mentioned here may have actually become a spiritual teacher in his turn and even founded a school of thought. There is also nothing to show that he was not a warrior. Somehow or other, by some process, which we can only faintly guess and not know precisely, all the materials available in ancient literature and tradition seem to have been combined to form the image that we find in the *Mahabharata* and the *Purānas*. Coming, now, to early Buddhist literature, we find Krishna still a non-aryan chief, for the *Sutta Pitaka*, the most ancient Buddhist text, mentions him as an Asura. The warrior and the religious student and teacher had not coalesced, or the coalition was not known to the composer of the *sutta*. The latter supposition seems nearer the truth, for it was on the banks of the Jumna and thereabouts, in the country between Mathura and Dvaraka, that the Krishna legend had its rise and development, and it is not improbable that even after Krishna had been aryanised and partly deified in that country, people in Magadha knew nothing of the process or the result. This is actually what we find in 300 B. C., when Megasthenes was ambassador at the court of Chandragupta at Pataliputra and wrote his famous account of India. He says that

in his time Heracles was worshipped in Methora and Kleisobora—words which most scholars interpret as meaning that Krishna as a hero like the Greek Heracles was worshipped in Mathura and Krishnapura. The worship of Krishna, then, seems to have already begun in the country in some form, in the form perhaps of a hero and demi-god; but this worship was, it would seem, more or less a local worship, one confined to particular parts of the country. However, in the course of two or three centuries this worship seems to have grown both in depth and breadth. Writer after writer arose who, in the form of Atharvan Upanishads, or poems (many of which seem to have been incorporated in the *Mahābhārata*) and *Purāṇas*, set forth Krishna's claims as an incarnation of God and a spiritual teacher. That these claims were at first opposed, seems clear from such stories as those of Paundraka Vāsudeva and Sisupāla. Paundraka claimed to be the real incarnation of Vāsudeva and assumed the fourfold insignia of Vishnu. But Nārada, Krishna's follower, having protested against his claims, he invaded Dvaraka and was killed by Krishna. Sisupāla opposed Krishna's claims as put forward by Bhishma at Yudhisthira's Rājasūya, and here again the incarnate Deity himself is made to establish his divinity by killing the unbeliever. These stories no doubt represent

the opposition which the Krishnaites met with in their attempts to set up their god as the incarnation of the Deity and draw the hearts of the people to him as such. This opposition however gradually disappeared and their attempts met with success. We need not try to trace the history of this success—one which is not yet complete—for there are thousands, if not tens of thousands, in the country, even among the orthodox, to whom Krishna is not yet what he is to his whole-hearted worshippers, भगवान् स्वयं, God himself. He is to them only a god, one of many gods, a part, *amsa*, of the Absolute. But with that we have nothing to do here. We have to do only with the history of the commencement of this worship. We see that in the long ages since the great battle was fought, Krishna remained unrecognized as an incarnation of God until we come to the time we are just speaking of, that is, about the beginning of the Christian era. If he had been held in those ages in the same estimation in which he is held in the *Gītā* and the Atharvan Vaishnava *Upanishads*, it would have left its mark in the sacred literature which belonged respectively to those ages. As there is no mark in it of this doctrine, we are right in concluding that both the doctrine itself and the literature in which it is set forth are comparatively new—post-Buddhistic undoubtedly, and

not far removed either way, that is, before or after, from the rise and early spread of Christianity.

I am, however, far from thinking that Christianity had anything to do with either the beginnings of Krishna-worship or the composition of the *Bhagavadgītā*. That theory is, I think, now exploded beyond any hope of rehabilitation. That in comparatively later stages of the development of Vaishnavism there was a good deal of borrowing from Christian ideas and sentiments on the part of the Vaishnava saints and philosophers, both directly from the Christian church established since the fifth century A. D. in Southern India and through travellers journeying to and from Christian countries, there seems to be no doubt. That the *Mahābhārata* itself, in the story of Nārada's journey to Svetadvīpa, records an actual contact of Indian and Christian thought, seems also not improbable. But these instances of mutual intercourse between Vaishnavism and Christianity do not disprove the spontaneous and independent growth of Krishna-worship in this country. The real motive for the deification and worship of Krishna must be sought elsewhere than in a wish to imitate Christ-worship. It must be sought, I think, where I do not know that any antiquarian has sought it—in the necessity that was felt by the post-Buddhist leaders of Brahmanical thought

of setting up a rival figure to Buddha and rallying the broken forces of Brahmanism round that figure. It did not perhaps require more than a century or two at the utmost for the Brāhmaṇas to see what a disintegrating force Buddhism was, and to devise means for successfully opposing that force. The old Sāstras had failed,—in their old forms at any rate. It was felt that they must be re-written, and they were re-written. The cast-iron system of mutually excluding castes under the unquestioned supremacy of the Brāhmaṇas, was interpolated into the oldest and most sacred records, records which were originally innocent of the system. That history is well told in Dr. Rhys Davids' *Buddhist India*. New Sāstras, it was felt, must be written, and they were written. They are the sectarian *Upanishads*, the *Dharmaśāstras*, the *Rāmāyana* in its Vishnuite form, and the *Puranas*. But what are Sāstras, whether old or new, compared with a personal embodiment of moral and spiritual excellence? For the first time in the history of India, perhaps in the history of the world, religion became embodied in a grand central figure—in a person—and men felt the power of such a religion. Before that time, the Sāstras had sufficed. But a time came when mere Sāstras would not avail,—when they could have power—power against opposing influences,—

only if they could be represented as recording the doings and sayings of a divine person—such as Buddha was in the opposed camp. It did not matter that he was not represented by all classes of his followers as an incarnation of God. All of them, theists and atheists alike, represented him as unborn, as having existed before his birth in the highest heavens, and as honoured by all the gods,—even by the highest gods of Brahmanism, and he therefore occupied, for the Buddhists, the position of the God of all gods, the Supreme Deity. Now, where was such a person to be found for the Bráhmancial system? It seems that when this necessity was felt, Krishna had already become a partially deified hero on the banks of the Jumna. As we have seen, Megasthenes found him in that honoured position when he was at Pataliputra. Krishna was at first worshipped perhaps in the same manner as heroes are worshipped in all countries in more or less rude times,—that is, as a warrior, as the hero of a hundred fights, as the vanquisher of powerful enemies like Kansa and Jarásandha, and the saviour of his people from the oppression of such tyrants. Such heroes have been worshipped even in refined Europe and in the refined nineteenth century, up to the time of Lord Nelson, without much regard to their moral character. Krishna seems to have been such a

hero at first and nothing more. And as we have already seen, he seems to have come from the aboriginal races, races which were, in the course of ages, aryanised and taken into the 'Bráhmaṇic fold. Besides what I have said before on the subject, the following facts or what stand for facts in a story chiefly mythical, seem to support the theory of Krishna's non-aryan origin. He is said to have lived in his childhood among the Gopas or Ábhiras. And who were the Gopas or Ábhiras? In the *Vaṇa* and *Mushala parvas* of the *Mahābhārata* they are spoken of as Dasyus and Mlēcchhas. Their manners and customs, as described in the *Purānas*, are those of rude and simple nomads—living on pasturage and having no settled habitation. In their dances, men and women, married and unmarried people, were promiscuously mixed up, and great liberties on women were allowed. Such a state of things was impossible in a truly aryan community. If Krishna was an Aryan, what led him to spend his childhood in such company? The reason given—the fear of Kansa—cannot be true. The prophecy or *Daiva-vāṇī* which Kansa is said to have heard about his death at the hands of his nephew, must be a pure myth—an after-thought. Prophecies about greatmen's childhood are manufactured after and not before they have become great. Fear of

Kamsa, therefore, cannot explain Krishna's sojourn at Braja and Brindában and his early exploits, his encounter with Putaná, Bakásur, Káliya, Kesi and such others, must be as much myths and after-thoughts as his flight from Mathura. He need not have fled from that city if it was really his birth-place. And what harm is there in supposing that Braja was his birthplace as well as the place where his childhood was spent? Mathura or Madhupurí, the city of Madhu, the non-aryan chief, may itself have been the capital of a non-aryan kingdom. That Kamsa himself was of non-aryan or mixed origin, seems to be recognised by the poet in the account he gives of his birth, namely that he was the natural son of an ~~asura~~ by Ūgrasen's wife. The close connection between Mathura and the Gopa settlements of Braja and Brindában, seems to prove that they were occupied by the same or allied tribes of settlers, differing only as townspeople differ from villagers. However, when we turn from the banks of the Jumna to the Yádava settlement at Dváraká, do we mark any great change in manners? Not to speak of others, such as Balaráma, with his eyes rolling in perpetual intoxication, Krishna, himself is made to join in revels and parties in which courtesans sing his praises, and drinking and dancing flow on in unfettered license. To crown all, a drunken riot, in



which Krishna himself joins and kills many, puts an end to the whole Yadu race, and the remnants of Krishna's family—the members of his large harem—are carried off by the Ābhíras, probably an unrefined portion or branch of his own race. It may be mentioned by the way, that the Gopas in Central India still retain their identity and continue their ancient custom of indulging in drink and dancing in circles in which men and women are promiscuously mixed up. It is true that drinking and dancing were not unknown to the ancient Aryans of India ; but where can such a picture of society be found in any Aryan community as we find in the accounts given by our poets of Brindá-ban and Dvāraká? However, whether Aryan or Non-Aryan, Krishna had already been recognized as a hero and demi-god among large classes of men—perhaps among classes which, on account of their comparatively late admission into the fold of Bráhmaism, were the likeliest to break off from that fold by the attractions of a new religious movement. That thousands and ten thousands had already broken off and gone over to the hostile camp, there can be no doubt. It was therefore of the utmost importance that this great favourite of the people should be raised to the dignity of an incarnation of the Deity and made the rallying point of a revived Bráhmaism,—that the current

stories about him should be recast and remodelled as much as possible, that his licenses should be explained away and spiritualised,—that genealogies should be framed connecting him with ancient families, that the highest philosophical depth, the deepest and purest emotions and the most unselfish and heroic conduct should be attributed to him. The revivalists did all this,—with what success, we find in the fully developed Krishna legend of later times. However, as to the image actually set before us, it seems to me to illustrate the popular adage—"Too many cooks spoil the broth." Whether the Krishna ideal as set forth in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas* did more good than harm in the past, may very well be doubted. As to the present time, it seems an utter failure. Neither Bankimchandra's forensic skill nor Upādhyāya Gaurgovinda Rāy's deep erudition has succeeded in inspiring any enthusiasm in its favour. Apart from the destructive effects of historical criticism upon it, a criticism, however, unknown to all but a few,—its own ponderous weight—the weight of actions felt to be unmistakably indefensible in the clear light of Reason and Conscience,—seems to weigh it down and makes it impossible for us to carry it as a lamp to light our path of life. If you feel any curiosity to have a glance at it, I shall,

in my second lecture, give you a sketch of Krishna's life as our books paint him, and leave you to judge how far, if at all, it deserves to be imitated. But if historical criticism and the re-awakened conscience of the nation are taking away the mythical and poetical Krishna from us, the Krishna of the *Bhagavadgita* is still left, for he is not far from any one of us. Who he is, and how he wants us to think, feel and act, we shall see in our third and the following lectures, if it indeed be God's will that I, who am so unworthy of the task, should discourse before you on these high subjects.

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## LECTURE II

### The Krishna of the "Mahabharata" and the "Puranas"

As I promised in my first lecture, I proceed to give in this the outlines of the picture, which our books have painted, of Krishna as a warrior, politician and religious teacher. As we have already seen, the picture is more legendary than historical. Several distinct characters, perhaps more or less historical, have been combined and represented as a single character; and imagination, both sacred and profane, has given it a high colouring. We have also seen the purpose underlying this effort of poetic creation. However, my object in presenting you with a short life of Krishna is twofold. I have found that the present generation of educated Indians are very imperfectly acquainted even with the outlines of that life. To such of my hearers, my account will give what they will perhaps accept as valuable information. Secondly, in view of the fact that some of our eminent scholars have commended that life as that of a divine man, worthy of imitation, a brief enumeration of the deeds ascribed to Krishna by the accredited authorities on his life will en-

able my hearers to judge for themselves how far the claim urged in favour of its imitableness is reasonable. Those who have put forth that claim have tried to explain and in a sense excuse much that seems objectionable in that life. Others have shown the unreasonableness of such pleading. I shall do neither the one nor the other. My task will be a simple one—that of giving a brief and unvarnished account of Krishna's life as it is found in the Sástras honoured by his followers, with only such remarks here and there as will relieve the monotony of the narration. I may add that such a task is now much easier than it would have been a generation back. Not only have the Sástras I refer to been translated into English and some of the Indian vernaculars, but there now exist compendiums of the life and teachings of Krishna by eminent scholars, men who may be trusted to have more or less faithfully reproduced the contents of the works from which they draw their information. In my present task I shall be guided chiefly by Pandit Gaurgovinda Ráy and to some extent by Babu Bankimchandra Chattopádhyáya, but I shall also sometimes supplement and slightly correct my guides by my direct knowledge of the original authorities. Both of them have, in their own ways, made a learned use of these authorities, the chief of which are the *Mahābhārata*, with its great appen-

dix, the *Harivamśa*, and the *Vishnu, Bhāgavata* and *Brahmavaivarta Purānas*. Babu Bankimchandra has made the desperate attempt of reaching what he considers the first stratum of the *Mahābhārata*,—a stratum that consisted of 24000 *slokas*, the one that is, as I showed in my first lecture, really the second. He thinks that in that form of the poem, Krishna is delineated as only a man,—a man living nevertheless a divine and ideal life, and that the representation of Krishna as an incarnation of God and the doer of miraculous deeds is the work of later poets, the composers of the later strata of the *Mahābhārata* and the writers of the *Purānas*. I do not think that Babu Bankimchandra has succeeded in finding the Krishna he sought, though, even if he had succeeded in finding him, he would have been far from historical. But he thinks he has found him. What he has found is a mere skeleton. But he clothes this skeleton in flesh and blood created by his imaginative genius and believes this creation of his as a veritable incarnation of God. Pandit Upādhyāya's work shows less of genius, but more of learning and patient industry. He collates all statements about Krishna in the *Mahābhārata*, the *Vishnu Purāna*, the *Harivamśa* and the *Bhāgavata*, and builds the whole into one connected narrative. He rejects all that

is miraculous in the material collected by him, but accepts the rest as historical with scarcely any criticism worth the name. To him Krishna is not indeed the incarnation of the Absolute, but he is nevertheless an ideal of excellence, one who had attained the highest wisdom and who lived and moved in the light of that wisdom. While rejecting the theological and historical conclusions of these learned writers, I thankfully avail myself of their deep scholarship in giving my proposed picture of the Krishna of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purānas*. I have to add that of the five principal authorities I have mentioned, the authorities to which both Pandit Upādhyāya and Babu Bankimchandra refer, the *Mahābhārata* is recognised as the oldest and therefore the most reliable. Statements made by a later authority but not found in an older, must necessarily be received with caution. Among the *Purānas* and the *Harivamsa* the chronological order is—the *Vishnu Purāna*, the *Harivamsa*, the *Bhāgavata Purāna*, the *Brahmavaivarta Purāna*. The last mentioned book, as a very recent work, and as contradicting much found in older authorities, is pronounced by both Pandit Upādhyāya and Babu Bankimchandra as historically useless, as it is also morally most objectionable. To begin my narrative then, Krishna was born in Mathura at midnight

on the Krishná Ashatami day of the month of Bhádra. His father was Vasudeva, of the Yadu race, and his mother, Devaki, daughter of Devaka, the brother of Ugrasen, king of Mathura. Kamsa, the issue of an illicit connection of Ugrasen's wife with Drumila, the Dánava king of Saubha, imprisoned Ugrasen and usurped the throne of Mathura. Having heard from Nárada, or *daiva-vant*, a voice from heaven, that his cousin Devaki's eighth child would kill him, he imprisoned both her and her husband, and killed six of their children as they were born one after another. The seventh child, Balaráma, was miraculously transferred from Devaki's womb to that of Rohini, another wife of Vasudeva. When the eighth child, Krishna, was born, he was secretly borne by his father to the other side of the Yamuná, where Nanda Gopa and his wife Yasodá, natives of Braja, were then living. The Yamuná rolled back her waters to make way for the divine child, and Ananta, the chief of serpents, protected him with his ample hood from the heavy torrent of rain that was then falling. By a previous arrangement, Vasudeva exchanged his son for Nanda's newly born daughter, Yoganidrâ or Mahámáyâ, and presented the latter to Kamsa as his eighth child, but she flew away, telling him that he who would kill him was being brought up by Nanda and Yasodá.



This led Kamsa to make a series of unsuccessful attempts to kill the child. With this object he sent to Braja a number of *asuras* in various forms. The killing of these *asuras* and a number of other heroic deeds, impossible for an ordinary human child, are the chief staple of the Pūranic account of Krishna's early life. Some of them are mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* also. As might be expected, the authorities differ largely in their narration of these feats. I mention only some of them, following chiefly the later authorities.

The first or one of the first of these is the killing of Putanā. She was Kamsa's nurse, and was sent by him to kill Krishna in the form of a female vulture, according to the *Harivamsa*, and of a beautiful woman according to the *Bhāgavata*. As she, pretending to suckle Krishna, put her poisoned breast into his mouth, he sucked it so powerfully as to draw out her very life-blood, so that she fell down with an yell and died.

Krishna performed another of these feats when he was only three months old. It was the breaking of a *sakata*, a cart which was used as a cup-board and had several jars and pans, full of milk and curd, ranged on it. According to the *Harivamsa*, Sakata was an *asura* sent by Kamsa and had entered the cart intending to crush the infant Krishna by its weight. However, Yasodā had

placed the boy under the cart and gone to bathe in the Yamuná. On her return she was told that he had kicked against it and broken it to pieces with all that lay on it. This event surprised and frightened Yasodá, and she offered *pujás* to avert the evils threatened by it.

Now, Putaná and Sakata's attempts to kill Krishna having failed, Kamsa sent another of his emissaries, an *asura* named Trinávarta, to attempt the same task. He came in the form of a bird and carried aloft the divine child, then only a year old. But he soon dropped down dead with the child safe and holding his throat tightly.

The next feat was the breaking of two *aijuna* trees growing side by side. They are described as the bodies of two *yakshas* who were converted into this form by a curse, and who were released by this feat of Krishna. When he had learnt to crawl about and could hardly be kept out of mischief, Yasodá tied him with a rope to a wooden mortar and went to mind her household duties. When she was out of sight, Krishna began to drag the mortar after him till it stuck fast between the trees. Still pulling the heavy weight after him, he uprooted the trees and made them

fall down with a tremendous noise, himself remaining unhurt by them.

Now, these events filled Nanda with fear, and he seriously thought of leaving Braja and moving to another settlement. While he was thus thinking, the place was infested with wolves which made great havoc among the cattle and made it quite unsafe. This fixed the wavering intention of the nomads and they moved with all their belongings to the pleasant woodland named Brindában. Krishna was then only seven years old.

After his removal to this new settlement, Krishna killed quite a large number of *asuras*. One of them was Aristhá, who came in the form of a bull; another, ~~Kesin~~ Kesin, who was disguised as a horse. Five others were Batsásura, Bakásura, Aghásura, Bomásura and Sankhachura, the last a *yaksha*. More important than these was Káliya, a snake chief, who lived with his family in a whirlpool of the Yamuná and thus poisoned its water. Krishna one day threw himself on Káliya's hood and danced so wildly as to make him vomit blood. He would thus have killed him, but on the intervention of the snake's family, he spared him and allowed him to move away to another abode.

The subjugation of Káliya was followed by *vastra-harana*, the carrying away of clothes, a hard nut to crack for worshippers and admirers

of the Puranic Krishna. The whole narration is so obscene, that even the merest outlines will, I fear, be felt to be indelicate. But I must give them in as decent a form as is possible, to make my brief account of Krishna's doings as full as I can. Some Gopis had dived into the waters of the Yamuná for a bath, leaving their clothes on the banks, as is said to be still the custom in some parts of the country. Krishna seized the clothes and with them climbed upon a tree on the riverside. When asked to return them, he refused to do so unless the women approached the tree and each begged her own dress for herself. When they did so, the clothes were returned. Now, this story is found only in the *Bhāgavata*, which gives it a religious significance, one which I have neither the wish nor the patience to expound.

The next of Krishna's feats was the uplifting of the Gobardhana Hill. The Gopas were about to celebrate their annual sacrifice to Indra, the god of rain, and began to make grand preparations for it. Krishna pointed out to them that as they were a pastoral and not an agricultural tribe, their real gods were kine, hills and woods, and them only they should worship, and not such gods as the rain-giving Indra. The Gopas were convinced, and giving up their intention of wor-

shipping Indra, celebrated a grand sacrifice to the hill Gobardhana, the nourisher of kine, accompanied with feasting and dancing. Now, if there is any truth in this story, it seems to confirm what I have said on the non-aryan origin and character of the Gopas. It seems to be a reminiscence of the days when the deva-worship of the early agricultural Aryans struggled, with varying success, against the more primitive cult of the non-aryan pastoral nomads. The Brindában Gopas seem to have at first partly adopted the religion of their Aryan conquerors, and then forsaken it at the instigation of one of their chiefs. However, Indra was, as he could not but be, greatly enraged at this affront offered to him, and as punishment, he poured rain on the Gopa settlement for seven days and nights continually. Krishna, nothing daunted, uprooted the hill and held it up as an umbrella over the settlement and thus protected the Gopas and their cattle from the ruinous effects of Indra's wrath. As to the jealousy between Indra and the Krishna of the *Rigveda* and that between the former and the Vishnu of the *Satapatha Bráhmāna*, I have already spoken in my first lecture.

I now come to that part of Krishna's youthful career which has seemed to all the most difficult to be defended, namely his dealings with the young women of Brindában, specially what is called his

*rasallā*. Rāsa is a sort of circular dance in which the hands of the dancers, men and women, are joined together. It is said to be still prevalent among some of the wild tribes of this country. Krishna, it is stated, was in the habit of often enjoying this dance with the young Gopis of Brindāban, who loved him passionately. One of these dances is described in the *Vishnu Purāna*, the *Harivamsa*, and the *Bhāgavatā*. All these authorities interpret the Gopis' love for Krishna as piety—love to God, and see nothing wrong in their amorous dealings with him,—dealings which, in the case of any other person, would be highly reprehensible according to their own admission. All agree as to the general character of the affair—the scene, the time and season, the drawing of the women with sweet music, the dance, the amorous feelings of the women for Krishna, and their expression in various ways. But while the *Vishnu Purāna* tries—not always successfully—to keep within the limits of decency, the *Harivamsa* begins to be plainly indecent, and the *Bhāgavatā* throws away all reserve and revels in indecency. The writers, specially the author of the *Bhāgavatā*, defend their god by saying that though indulging in amorous practices, he was free from passion, and that as the all-pervading Deity living in the hearts of the Gopis as well as their

husbands, he could not be guilty of adultery in anything that he did to them. Recent admirers of Krishna excuse him by saying that as, on the *Bhāgavata's* own admission, Krishna, when he took part in the *rāsa* dance, was only in his tenth year, the dance was nothing but child-play to him, and that the amorous feelings and practices ascribed to the dancers are mere poetic exaggerations. The *Bhāgavata* seems to anticipate this objection by saying that Krishna's growth was precocious and that even at the age of ten he had attained to the maturity of a young man. However, there is an authority on Krishna and Krishnaism, already mentioned by me, which goes much further than the *Bhāgavata* in indecency. It is the *Brahmavaivarta Purāna*. However ashamed recent admirers of Krishna may be of the *Purāna*, it is the real basis of modern Vaishnavism, specially of the Bengal form of the cult. Rādhā, the chief of the Gopis, the most passionate lover of Krishna and the object of his deepest love, is not to be found anywhere in the *Vishnu Purāna*, the *Harivamsa* and the *Bhāgavata*, not to speak of the *Mahābhārata*. The *Vishnu* and the *Bhāgavata* only hint at an unknown Gopi with whom Krishna was supposed by the other Gopis to have roamed alone in the woods. The *Brahmavaivarta* takes up this hint and evolves an elaborate story

and a system of theology out of it. What this story and this theology are like, my Bengali hearers may see for themselves in Babu Bankim-chandra Chattopádhya's *Krishna-Charitra*. It would be going out of my limits for me to give even a short account of them. (See Lec. viii.)

I now come to Krishna's career as a regular warrior and politician, a career which began, we are told, when he was in his twelfth year. His first act in this part of his life was the assassination of his maternal uncle Kamsa. 'Assassination' is not too strong a term for it, for though Kamsa had given him provocation, he was not killed in the course of a battle or even in a single combat. Having heard of Krishna's youthful feats at Brindában, Kamsa got frightened and determined to secure his death by confronting him with a great athlete in an open exhibition of arms. Accordingly he announced the celebration of a *dhanuryajna*, a bow sacrifice, and invited Krishna, Balaráma and their Gopa friends to it. Akrura, an adherent of Krishna, but an officer of Kamsa, was deputed by the latter to bring the brothers to Mathura. They came, determined to kill Kamsa. He had provoked not only them, but other Yádavas also, whom his persecution had compelled to leave Mathura. The brothers were therefore supported by a conspiracy against him. Having arrived at Mathura, they



desired to change their simple Gopa dress for a more decent one, and asked for clothes from Kamsa's washerman, whom they met in the streets. As the man behaved insolently with them, they killed him and took from his stock whatever clothes they liked. They then met Kubjá, a hunch-backed woman who served as Kamsa's perfumer. At their request she anointed them with sandal paste and in return was cured by Krishna of her bodily deformity. The *Bhāgavata* makes him visit her on a subsequent occasion and describes his union with her with its characteristic indecency. However, on the present occasion, the brothers, anointed by Kubjá and garlanded by Sudámá, a flower-seller, entered the place of sacrifice and broke the great bow to which the sacrifice was to be offered. The frightened Kamsa sent an elephant named Kuvalayapída to kill them. Krishna killed the elephant and entered the arena. There the brothers encountered Kamsa's chosen athletes, Chánura, Mustika, Toshalaka and Andhra. Krishna killed Chánura and Toshalaka and Balaráma the other two. Frustrated in his plan of securing Krishna's death by strategem, Kamsa ordered the brothers and their Gopa friends to be turned out and banished from his kingdom, their herds to be confiscated and Vasudeva, Nanda, and his own father

Ugrasen to be assassinated. At this Krishna got upon the platform on which Kamsa was seated, and seizing him by the hair, threw him down on the ground and killed him. Having consoled Kamsa's weeping wives, he ordered a royal cremation for him, and refusing the kingdom offered him by Ugrasen, installed the latter on the throne and invited his banished relatives to return to Mathura.

After this, Krishna and Balaráma were initiated by the sage Garga and went for a course of instruction to Sándípani, a sage of Avantipur. At the end of their school career, they rescued their teacher's son from Panchajana, a sea-monster by whom he had been carried away. Panchajana was killed by Krishna and his conch 'Pánchajanya' was ever after used by him. About the real meaning of the conch, I spoke in my last lecture.

We next find Krishna fighting with Jarásandha, emperor of Magadha, and Kálayavana, a Saka or Scythian invader. If there is any historicity in these narrations, they are no doubt reminiscences of the Greek invasions and the conquests of the Mauryan emperors, and cannot refer to more ancient periods of our history. To the remote ancients Magadha, even when known, was a non-aryan kingdom outside the limits of Hindu civilisation.

But Jarásandha, as described in our books, is a Kshatriya emperor and a devout worshipper of the Aryan gods. However, enraged by Krishna's assassination of Kamsa, his son-in-law, Jarásandha is said to have invaded Mathura seventeen times and to have been every time repulsed by Krishna. Fearing, however, that an eighteenth invasion would be disastrous to the city, he removed the Yádavas to Dváraká at the west end of the Guzrat Peninsula. This may be a poetical version of a real emigration of a band or bands of people from the banks of the Yamuna to Guzrat. However, after the removal of the Yádavas from Mathura, the city was besieged by Kálavyavan, who came, at the instigation of Jarásandha, with a vast army of Sakas, Parthians, Khasas and other hillmen. While pursuing the unarmed Krishna, however, out of the city, the invader was burnt to ashes by fire issuing from the eyes of king Muchakunda, who had been sleeping in a mountain cave, and whom he had awakened with a kick, mistaking him for Krishna. This Muchakunda is a Hindu version of Rip Van Winkle, but a much more profound sleeper than his American prototype, for it is said that he had been sleeping ever since the Tretáyuga, when he had laid himself down in the cave, exhausted by his wars with the enemies of the Aryan gods. How-

ever, Krishna defeated the Mlechchha army, but while flying to Dvāraká with the booty, he was overtaken by Jarásandha. He, however, evaded his enemy by climbing a hill and flying to Dvāraká after jumping down from it. Jarásandha's death at the hands of Bhíma, who was helped by Krishna, came later and will be narrated by me in due course.

Krishna was now, for the first time, married. He married Rukminí, daughter of Bhishmaka, king of Vidarbha. Her father, at Jarásandha's advice, was making preparations to get her married to Sishupála, Krishna's cousin and king of Chedi. But Krishna carried her off on the day before the proposed marriage. The *Bhāgavata* says she had fallen in love with Krishna and had addressed a love-letter to him. However, Rukminí was gradually followed by an enormously vast army of co-wives till the number of Krishna's consorts rose to sixteen thousand one hundred and eight. His children numbered one lac and eighty thousand. The chief of his wives were the well-known eight, Rukminí, Satyabhámá, Jāmbavatí, Kálindí, Mitrabindá, Satyá, Bhadrá and Lakshmaná. The remaining sixteen thousand and one hundred were married to him on the same day. They belonged originally to the harem of king Naraka of Prágjyotish, whom Krishna

defeated and killed at the invitation of Indra, whose mother's ear-rings had been carried away by Naraka. While paying a visit after the battle to Indra's heaven in company with Satyabhámā, this lady took a fancy to Indra's famous *párijat* tree. To oblige his wife, Krishna had to fight with the god whom he had just favoured. Indra, though the chief of the Vedic gods, and though he was helped by the latter on this occasion, was indeed no match for the 'incarnation of the Supreme Being' and was forced to part with his favourite flower-tree, which was thus carried to Dváraká and planted there. Reading this story in full in the *Vishnu Purána*, one finds out the motive underlying it, namely, showing that Krishna is more powerful than all the Vedic gods. One also wonders how a picture full of such things, things showing neither true piety nor true poetry, is accepted even by wise and thoughtful people as the picture of an ideal man. However, before I narrate the other feats and achievements of this 'ideal man', I shall tell you briefly how he obtained his chief eight wives. I have already said how he got Rukminí. Satyabhámā was the daughter of Satrájit, a Yádava chief who gave her away in marriage to Krishna because he was afraid of him and wished to buy his favour. Jámavatrí was the daughter of Jámavána, a bear chief, against whom

Krishna waged a long war to recover a precious gem he had taken away from a Yádava. Jámbavápa was defeated and presented his daughter to Krishna as a peace-offering. Kálindí went through a series of austerities in order to get Krishna as her husband and her devotion was rewarded by the marriage she had sought. Mítrabindá was a cousin of Krishna and was carried off by him from the *svayambara* grounds. Satyá was the daughter of Nagnajit, king of Ayodhyá, and was won by Krishna when he had achieved a brave feat of arms, namely killing a number of naughty bulls belonging to Nagnajit. Bhadrá was another cousin of Krishna and was married by him in the usual way. Lakshmaná was the daughter of Brihatsena, king of Madra, and was carried off by him from the *svayambara* grounds. The *Vishnu Purána* ascribes a feeling of self-depreciation to the 'incarnation of the Deity' on account his polygamy. When the question as to who should wear the precious gem 'Syamantaka' came to be discussed at an assembly of the Yádavas, Krishna said that it could be worn only by a holy man, or else the wearer would be destroyed. He declared that he himself was unfit to wear it on account of his taking so many wives. He declared Akrura alone as worthy of wearing it. From what is said of Akrura in the books, he seems to have been far

from possessing the holiness thus ascribed to him. In fact, from the description, given in the books, of the Yádavas of Dváraká, of their domestic broils, drunkenness and lasciviousness, they seem to have been veritable angels, and with all their efforts at portraiting ideal characters, our Miltons, the authors of the *Purānas*, succeed, and that only now and then, in painting men like Krishna and Akrura as only a little less than these precious angels. The story of the gem 'Syamantaka,' which I now proceed to narrate briefly, will partly illustrate what I say. Satrájit got it from the sun. Krishna thought it should be worn by a better man, but Satrájit refused to part with it. Prasena, Satrájit's brother, while hunting with the gem on him, was killed by a lion. Jámbavána, the bear chief, killed the lion and carried it off to his den. But the Yádavas thought Krishna had killed Prasena for the sake of the gem. They seem to have had no faith in his divinity, or had strange notions of the divine character. Krishna recovered the gem, in the way I have already related, and returned it to Satrájit. Satrájit, as I have already said, was afraid of Krishna, and bought his favour by offering him Satyabhámá. This, however, offended Akrura, Kritavarmá, Satadhanvá and other Yádavas who had sought the lady's hand. They conspired against Satrájit, and Satadhanvá killed

him and took possession of the gem. To avenge his father-in-law's murder, Krishna killed Sata-dhanvā, but could not find the gem with him, as he had secretly given it to Akrura. Balarāma, however, thought that Krishna had the gem but did not confess this. Krishna might have exclaimed with Cæsar—"Et tu Brute?" However, Akrura, in order to avert detection and violence, began to perform a long series of *'yajnas*, for a Kshatriya engaged in sacrifices was equal to a Bráhmaṇa and could not be killed. But Krishna found him out and on Akrura's confession allowed the gem to remain with him in the way I have already stated. With himself he pronounced Balarāma to be unfit to wear it, as he was addicted to drinking. Satyabhámā, whose desire for Indra's *párijāt* had led Krishna to wage war against that god, was this time denied the satisfaction of getting the gem, even though she claimed it as her father's property.

Krishna's next feat was his fight with Vána, the thousand-armed king of Sonitapur. Krishna's grandson, Aniruddha, had secretly married Vána's daughter, Ushá, and was living with her. Vána, being informed of this, imprisoned him. Krishna marched against Vána, and in the course of the fight that ensued, cut off his arms. His god, Siva, intervened and saved his life. Krishna re-



turned to Dvāraká with Aniruddha and Ushá. All's well that ends well.

The next important event was the killing of Paundra, king of Karusha, to which I have already referred in my first lecture. Killing seems to be the most divine act in the eyes of our Purána-writers,—one which proves divinity more than any other act. And this killing of Paundra was a specially divine act, since the fellow not only denied Krishna's divinity, but assumed Vishnu's fourfold insignia,—the conch, the quoit, the club and the lotus, and declared himself to be the real Vásudeva. He is also said by one authority, to have invaded Dvāraká. In the fight that ensued, he showed great bravery, but was at length overpowered and killed by Krishna. Another account makes Krishna himself proceed to Paundra's capital in response to his challenge to return to him the insignia, and kill him by throwing them upon him. This was perhaps a more godlike procedure than the former. We next find Krishna at Panchála, where he went to attend Draupadí's *svayambara*. He stopped the fight that followed Arjuna's winning the Panchála princess, declaring to the infuriated Kshatriyas that as Draupadí had been rightfully won, there was no occasion for fighting. When the Pándavas returned with the princess to their temporary quarters in Drupada's capital,

Krishna visited them and introduced himself and his brother to them. When they were married he made them rich presents, and when they were received back into Dhritarashtra's favour, he helped them to establish themselves as rulers at Indraprastha, and returned to Dvāraká.

The next important event with which Krishna is concerned is Arjuna's marriage with Subhadrá, sister of Balaráma and Krishna's half-sister. In the course of his travels Arjuna arrived at the holy place of Prabhása, and was received by Krishna on the hill of Raivataka. There he was enamoured of Subhadrá and asked Krishna how he could get her. Krishna advised him to carry her off as a brave Kshatriya without depending upon the chances of a *svayambara*, the usual Kshatriya form of marriage. The Yádavas were at first enraged at this outrage, but when Krishna convinced them that Arjuna would be a very worthy husband for Subhadrá, and that by carrying her off he had done nothing unworthy of a hero, they consented to the union. And how could they do otherwise? Krishna did not simply argue like us, poor talkers. He, as we have already seen, had backed his precepts by his example.

However, we now come to Yudhisthira's Rájasúya and Krishna's removal of two obstructions to it, Jarásandha and Sishupála. Jarásandha had impi-

soned a large number of kings<sup>a</sup> and intended to sacrifice them to Rudra. Unless he was killed and the imprisoned princes released and given an opportunity to pay homage to Yudhishthira, the latter's claim as emperor could not be established. Krishna therefore proceeded with Bhíma and Arjuna to Rájagriha, Jarásandha's capital, and challenged him to a single combat with any one of them he might choose. Such a challenge could not be refused by a Kshatriya, and Jarásandha, at the anticipation of death at his opponent's hand, declared his son Sahadeva as his heir-apparent and chose Bhíma as his opponent. The combat lasted thirteen days, and Jarásandha at length met with a painful death at his rival's hand. Having put Sahadeva on his father's throne, and invited the released princes to attend Yudhishthira's Rájasúya, Krishna and his friends returned to Indraprastha.

In due course the Rájasúya came off. Of the various functions and duties connected with the ceremony, Krishna is said to have taken charge of washing the feet of the Bráhmanas. This is a sure indication of the comparative modernness of the *Mahābhārata*, at any rate, of this story. For in ancient times, even when the supremacy of the Bráhmanas had been established, the Kshatriyas never paid them any servile honour. However, when the sacrifice was over, the time came for Yudhishthira to

make presents to the assembled princes, priests and other persons deserving honour. To whom must honour be paid first? Yudhisthira having asked Bhíshma's opinion on the matter, the latter replied that Krishna was the person to be honoured first. Accordingly Sahadeva, at Yudhisthira's command, presented the *arghya*, the mark of honour, to Krishna, and the latter accepted it. This upset Sishupála, who made a long speech, challenging Krishna's right to the honour and abusing the Pándavas for paying and Krishna for accepting it. Bhíshma made another speech, narrating Krishna's exploits and achievements at length, and declaring his divinity. Sishupála rose again, rebutted Bhíshma's arguments one after another, and grossly abused him. It is pointed out by Krishna's recent biographers, that of the charges brought against Krishna by Sishupála, there is no mention of his dealings with the Brindában Gopís, a sure indication, according to them, that when the *Mahábhārata* was composed, the story of these dealings of Krishna, a story made so much of by the writers of the Puranas and the later poets, was not conceived. However, at the end of Sishupála's speech, Bhíshma, who saw that Yudhisthira was afraid lest Sishupála and his followers might obstruct the completion of the ceremony, said, addressing them, that if they were resolved

to die, they might challenge the divine Krishna himself to fight. At this Sishupála challenged Krishna, who rose in response and narrated his opponent's numerous misdeeds. Then with the words, "At the request of his mother, my aunt, I have pardoned a hundred of Sishupála's offences. But I cannot pardon the insulting words he has spoken of me before the assembled princes; I kill him before you all," he threw his *chakra* at him and cut off his head.

Sishupála's death led to Krishna's war with Sálva, king of Saubha, who, to avenge his friend's death, invaded Dváraká and sacked it in Krishna's absence at Indraprastha. Returning, however, from the Pándava capital, Krishna fought a long fight with Sálva, in the course of which the divine hero was hard pressed and often led into painful errors by his crafty enemy, who is credited by the poet with possessing magical powers. However, he at length fell a victim to the divine *gada* or club.

The club and the quoit accounted for two more enemies, who came to avenge the deaths of Paundra and Sálva. They were Dantabakra and Biduratha, brothers, and related to Krishna as his cousins. They, however, need not detain us.

We meet with Krishna next in the forest where the Pándavas were living with Draupadí after losing their kingdom by the game of dice. He

blamed Yudhisthira for having engaged in the game, but consoled him, his brothers and Draupadí with the prediction that their oppressors would meet with deserved punishment, and that they would be restored to the possession of their kingdom. On a second visit to the forest at Draupadí's request, Krishna performed a miracle. To try the exiled Yudhisthira's resources, the sage Durvása came to seek his hospitality with a large number of followers, when Draupadí herself had finished her meal and there was nothing to place before the guests. When, however, they went for their bath, Krishna made them feel as if they had had a most hearty meal, and so instead of coming to partake of the meal promised to them, they went their ways, utterly discomfited.

We next find Krishna at the capital of king Viráta, where he went to attend the marriage of his nephew Abhimanyu, Arjuna's son by Subhadrá, with Uttará, daughter of Viráta. After the marriage, he pleaded the cause of the Pándavas at a meeting of the assembled princes. He was not for war, but for peace, even if the Pándavas had to lose half their kingdom for it; but he thought that war and the destruction of Duryodhana's party were inevitable if the claims of the Pándavas were utterly disregarded. He left for Dváraká with the instruction that if negotiations

should fail and war should be declared, invitation to him to join in it should be sent. last of all. Negotiations followed on the one hand and preparations for war on the other. Arjuna and Duryodhana having both gone to invite Krishna, he gave them the choice of ten krores of Gopa soldiers, called Náráyana, on the one hand, and his own self as non-combatant charioteer, on the other. Duryodhana chose the soldiers and Arjuna Krishna himself.

Other ambassadors having failed to secure peace, Krishna himself undertook an embassy to Hastinápura. He tried his utmost to persuade Duryodhana to do justice to the Pándavas, but found him too obstinate and obdurate. Finding war inevitable, he tried to secure Karna to the Pándavas' side, but failed in this attempt also.

The war broke out. On the first day, as the two armies stood face to face, and Arjuna looked at those with whom he had to fight, the presence of innumerable friends and relatives in the hostile camp,—men whom he must kill or help in killing,—filled him with sadness. He communicated his feelings to Krishna, and weighed down with sorrow and horror at the apparently heinous crime he was going to commit, cast down his arms and sat down on his chariot. What Krishna said to cheer him up, remove his doubts and give

him an idea of man's duties, ethical and spiritual, is said to be recorded in the *Bhagavadgītā*. That teachings filling eighteen chapters could not be imparted in a battle-field, is plain to every one not blinded by bigotry. That this *Bhagavadgītā* is an interpolation awkwardly introduced into the original poem, will be evident to every one who critically examines the place and the way in which it is sewed up, as it were, with the main current of the narrative. That it cannot be the utterance of a man who lived, if he actually took part in the war, in or about the twelfth century B. C., I have shown in my first lecture. What I have to add here is that if it were not erroneously believed, as is done all but universally in this country, that the highly spiritual teachings of the *Gītā* were imparted by the Krishna of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas*, people—at any rate thoughtful and right-minded people—would not care a straw for that Krishna. But why should one believe that these teachings are his? Evidently they belong to the author of the *Gītā*, whoever he may be, and their ascription to Krishna, the popular god and hero, is a mere setting intended to make them attractive. When we see in this light the relation of the *Gītā* to the epic and Puranic Krishna, the latter's life and character, as depicted by our poets, cease to be



of any concern to us and we are spared both the humiliation of defending and explaining an indefensible character and the trouble of decrying it.

However, in the course of the war, Krishna is said to have twice broken his promise not to fight. To help Arjuna in his fight with Bhíshma he rushed against the latter with arms and had to be interrupted and pacified by the former. Moreover, he is said to have done a number of objectionable actions, the chief of which are the following. They are all admitted as unrighteous by the poets, but are nevertheless defended as necessary.

1. When Sátyaki, Krishna's friend, was hard pressed by Bhúrisravá, son of Somadatta, Krishna induced Arjuna to cut off his arms, and thereby made it easy for Sátyaki to kill him.

2. When Abhimanyu was unfairly surrounded and killed by seven Kaurava warriors, Arjuna vowed the death of the ringleader, Jayadratha, next day before sunset, or, failing that, his own death by entering into fire. When the sun was about to set, and Jayadratha remained unslain, Krishna miraculously hid the sun, on which Jayadratha, having come out, Krishna uncovered the sun, and Arjuna killed his enemy.

3. Despairing of Drona being ever killed by fair means, Krishna advised the Pándavas to kill

him unfairly. If he could be made to cast down his arms, he could, Krishna said, be killed easily. This could be done if he was told that his son, Asvattháma was dead. Bhíma tried the suggested devise. He killed an elephant named after Drona's son and told him that Asvattháma was killed. The warrior was somewhat depressed by the news, but did not quite believe it. At this juncture he was hard pressed by a number of sages to cease fighting and prepare himself for heaven with meditations worthy of a Bráhmaṇa. This checked the hero still more and he applied to the truthful Yudhisthira for correct information about his son. Finding Yudhisthira unwilling to tell a lie, Krishna overcame his reluctance by a long exhortation, in the course of which he announced his ethics of untruth in the following edifying text from Vasishtha's Smṛiti :—

“विवाहकाले रतिसम्ययोगे प्राणालये सर्वभनापहारे ।

विप्रस्य चार्थं हनृतं वदेत पद्मानृताप्याहुः पातकानि ॥”

That is, “In marriage, in amorous dealings, when one's life is in danger, when the whole of one's possession is going to be lost, and when a Bráhmaṇa's interest is at stake, untruth should be told. The wise have said that speaking untruth on these five occasions is not a sin.” One shudders to think what a

blighting effect this dreadful law, sanctioned by one believed to be God incarnate, has had on the morals of the nation. However, Yudhisthira's scruples were stifled, and he said to his preceptor, "Yes, *Aśvatthámá* is killed," adding in a low voice, "that is, an elephant," which last words, however, were not heard by Drona. His depression was complete, and on hearing some bitterly reproachful words from Bhíma, he gave up his arms, and while sitting in a meditative posture, was killed by *Dhrishtadyumna*.

4. When Bhíma was unsuccessfully fighting with Duryodhana by the side of the *Dvaipáyana* Lake, Krishna reminded him through Arjuna that he had vowed the breaking of his opponent's thighs. Now, striking a rival below the navel was unfair, but as Duryodhana could not be killed except by such an unfair means, Krishna caused it to be adopted.

Now, I shall barely mention three more deeds of Krishna—and these not bad but good deeds—before I describe the closing scene of his life, his own death and the destruction of his people. At the end of the war, Krishna induced Yudhisthira to visit Bhíshma, who was lying on his bed of arrows, and profit by his great wisdom. When he was about to leave Hastinápur for *Dvaraká*, Arjuna asked him to repeat the teachings he had imparted

to him just before the commencement of the first day's battle. Krishna said he could not then command the state of *yoga* from which he had spoken on the former occasion, and could not therefore say all that he had said. But he would, he said, tell him something to that effect. What he said to Arjuna on this occasion is embodied in the *Anugītā*. When Krishna returned to Hastināpur on the occasion of Yudhisthira's Asvamedha, he revived Uttará's dead child, Parikshit, who had been killed in the womb by Asvatthámá's *brahmstra*, divine weapon. Before he left Dvāraká Krishna had done the last of his many heroic deeds,—the killing of Nikumba, a *daitya*. Krishna's son, Pradyumna, had carried off Prabhávatí, Nikumba's niece and killed her father, Vajranábha. Nikumba retaliated by carrying off Bhánumatí, daughter of Bhánu, a Yádava. Why should he retaliate? Krishna marched against Nikumba with Arjuna and Pradyumna, killed him and married Bhánumati to Sahadeva, the youngest of the Pándavas.

And now comes the closing act of the great drama, the destruction of the Yádavas and the death of Krishna. As I have said more than once in this and my first lecture, the Yádavas were an ideal people. They knew full well the value of what I may call the three W's—wine, woman and

war—the three chief sources of excitement in highly civilised people. Krishna and Balaráma fully represented their people in all these three respects. I remember to have read in the books only one instance of Krishna's being found drunk, and this I have not mentioned in my narrative. But his deficiency in this respect was more than fully made up, as you all know, by his revered brother, Balaráma. However, Krishna knew his people well, as he could not but do, being himself a typical Yádava. In founding his city of Dváraká, he had taken care to settle thousands of 'unfortunates' there. As the Harivamsa says:

दैत्याधिवासं निष्कृत्य यदुर्मिददविक्रमे ।

वेश्यो निवेशिता वीर द्वास्वत्यां सहस्रशः ॥

That is, "O hero, having conquered the abodes of the Daityas (giants) with the help of brave Yadus, the Lord settled thousands of public women in Dváraká." These women, it seems, were often had in requisition, as singers and dancers, even by the divine leaders of the people. The poets describe a sea-trip in which these women formed a principal source of enjoyment. Excited by their singing and dancing, the divine brothers took the hands of their respective wives,—fortunately not the wives of other people, like modern Europeans—

and joined in the dancing. They were followed by the other Yádava chiefs and by Arjuna and Nárada. Then a fresh excitement was sought. Men and women all fell into the sea and at Krishna's suggestion, the gentlemen began a *jalakrīḍā*, water-sport, with the ladies, Krishna leading one party, and Balaráma another, while the courtesans added to the amusement by their music. This was followed by eating and drinking, and this again by a special musical performance in which the leaders themselves exhibited their respective skill in handling various musical instruments. It will thus be seen what a jolly people these Yádavas were, and with what contempt they would have treated the objections urged now-a-days by the Bráhmas and such other purists against nautch parties and the native theatres. And is it any wonder that such objections fall flat on people who believe that there is divine sanction for the institutions objected to? However, it was in one of these revels,—a drunken revel—that the Yádavas were destroyed. They, it is said, had incurred the displeasure of a number of sages by a childish trick played on the latter by some of their boys. These boys disguised Śám̐ba, one of Krishna's sons, as a woman with child, tying an iron pestle below his navel, and asked the sages to say what child the 'woman' would give birth to. The enraged

sages said 'she' would produce an iron pestle which would be the ruin of the Yádavas. Fearing the worst consequences from this curse, the boys took the pestle to the sea-side and rubbed it away. But its particles came out in the form of *erakas*, a kind of reeds, and its last remaining bit, which had been thrown into the sea, was afterwards recovered and used by a hunter as the point of an arrow. Now, it was with these *erakas* that the Yádavas killed themselves. They had gone in large parties to the holy place of Prabhása. But what are holy places to unholy men? They indulged in drinking there and this proved their ruin. The evils of drinking had been found out at length by Krishna and some other Yádava leaders, and it was prohibited on pain of death by a public notification. But the prohibition had no effect. The drunken Yádavas at first quarrelled and then began to fight and kill one another. When some of Krishna's own sons were killed, he himself joined in the fight and killed a large number of his own people. He then went in search of Balaráma. He found him in a meditative posture and saw his spirit passing out of his body in the form of a large serpent, i.e., Sesha Nága, the divine snake whom he had incarnated. Krishna now felt that it was time for him also to pass away. He then bade farewell to his father

and his wives, telling them that he had sent for Arjuna, who would take charge of them. Then he seated himself under a tree, hidden by its leafy and outstretching branches, and composed his mind in meditation. While thus sitting, a hunter named Jará mistook him for a deer and hit him with an arrow, one pointed with the last remaining bit of the fatal pestle. Discovering his mistake, the man fell at Krishna's feet and was pardoned and comforted by him. After this Krishna's spirit flew away to heaven, illumining all sides by its dazzling light. Arjuna came and proceeded towards Hastinápura with the surviving Yádavas,—men and women. But his good genius having left him, he had lost the power of his hitherto mighty arm and his unrivalled skill as an archer. A number of Abhíras, armed only with *lathis*, attacked his party and carried off many of the women, and he reached Hastinápura only with a small remnant. After Arjuna's departure the sea engulfed Dváraká, and nothing was left to speak of the Yádavas, their glories, their domestic broils and their revels.

Now, after this long address, giving the outlines of Krishna's life as told in our ancient books and by his recent biographers, and after the occasional remarks I have already made in the course of the narration, I have neither the time



nor the mind to make any further comments on the character depicted. I leave you to judge for yourselves whether, in the revival of all that is true, good and elevating in the national religion that is going on on all sides,—a revival in which I count myself a most humble factor,—the worship of Krishna, either as a divine being or an ideal man, deserves to be revived, and whether this task is worth the labour of our poets, thinkers and missionaries. If you answer this question in the negative, you need not think that you lose anything valuable said in the name of Krishna in our sacred books. The precious teachings on *jñāna*, *bhakti* and *karma* in the *Gītā* and the Puranas are not the utterances of any semi-mythical or imaginary person. They are the words of the divine Logos incarnate in all men, the manifestation of the Light that lighteth every man coming into the world. It is that Krishna, Krishna as the divine Logos, and not as a mere Puranic hero, that speaks in the *Bhagavadgītā*, as I understand it. And it is of that Krishna,—though I cannot say I like this much-abused name,—it is of the eternal Word that was in the beginning with God and that *was* God, and *is* God, that comes unto his own in the life of every one of us, whether we know him or not—that I shall speak, God willing, in my third lecture.

### LECTURE III

## THE KRISHNA OF THE *BHAGAVADGĪTĀ*

We have seen in our first lecture that the story of Krishna is more or less mythical and legendary. In our second lecture we have seen that if all that the *Mahābhārata* and the Puranas say about him is true, he cannot have been an incarnation of God. In the present lecture let us for a moment forget the conclusions of our first two lectures. Let us take it for granted that Krishna, the Krishna who uttered the *Bhagavadgītā*, was a historical person, and that he did not bear the objectionable character which our poets ascribe to him. With these suppositions in our mind, we have now to ask the question, "In what sense did Krishna believe and declare himself to be God incarnate?" and the similar question, "In what sense did Arjuna and the author of the *Bhagavadgītā* accept him as such a divine being?" It seems to me that it is not worth while to enter into the system of philosophy, and spiritual culture given in the *Gītā* before answering these questions, for their right answers seem to be, as will gradually be seen, the very key to that system. Those who have not answered these questions, or have an-

swered them wrongly, seem to have read the *Gītā* to little profit. However, before taking up these questions, we may as well dispose of another, one which too is important, though not so important as the other two. That question is whether the author of the *Gītā* believed Krishna, the Krishna who speaks in his book, to be a historical person, or he is only a creation of his devout imagination. Now, I confess that it is not possible to answer this question satisfactorily and that we can only make a more or less reasonable guess. As we have seen in our first lecture, the *Bhagavadgītā* is a more or less late addition to the original *Mahābhārata* and that before it was added to the original poem, Krishna had already had a place in it. The Krishna legend, then, in some form or other, was known to and not invented by the author of the *Gītā* and his contemporaries. Whether he accepted it as a legend or as history, we have no means of deciding. It cannot indeed be said that the critical spirit, which now leads us to sift historical evidence before accepting it, was absent in his day. Some of our ancient writers display this spirit in a keen form, but how far they applied it to matters historical, I cannot say. It is still more doubtful how far the author of the *Gītā* imbibed that spirit. That he was a philosopher, admits of no doubt ; but the whole of his tenth

chapter and the 'beginning of his fourth chapter betray a strong Purānic tendency in him,—a tendency to accept legend as history. It seems likely therefore that he accepted Krishna as a historical person and the main incidents of the Kurukshetra war as historical. It may also be that when he wrote, he found Krishna already deified and shared in the popular belief. But even if this much be admitted, it does not follow that Krishna's colloquy with Arjuna in the battle-field was one of the incidents that had come down to the author of the *Gītā* as a tradition. That may very well be a creation of his poetic imagination,—a creation intended to teach and impress on the minds of his readers some of the highest lessons on spiritual life. That this is so, seems to be probable, as I already hinted in my first lecture, from a comparison of the third *valli* of the first chapter of the *Kathopanishad* with the *Gītā* story. That the composition of the *Kathopanishad* preceded that of the *Gītā* and that the author of the latter was a diligent reader of the former, we have already seen in our first lecture. Now, the *Kathopanishad* texts I refer to are the following :—

आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि शरीरं रथमेव तु ।  
 बुद्धिन्तु सारथिं विद्धि मनः प्रग्रहमेव च ॥  
 इन्द्रियाणि ह्यादाहुः बिंषयास्तेषु गोचरान् ।  
 आत्मैन्द्रिय मनोयुक्तं भोक्तेत्वाहुः संनोषिणः ॥

यस्त्वविज्ञानवान् भवत्युक्तेन मनसा सदा ।  
 तस्मैन्द्रियाण्यवस्थानि दुष्टाश्च इव सारथेः ॥  
 यस्तु विज्ञानवान् भवति युक्तेन मन्त्रसा सदा ।  
 तस्मैन्द्रियाणि वस्थानि सदस्या इव सारथेः ॥  
 यस्त्वविज्ञानवान् भवत्यमनस्कः सदाशुचिः ।  
 न स तत्पदमाप्नोति संसारक्षाधिगच्छति ॥  
 यस्तु विज्ञानवान् भवति समनस्कः सदा शुचिः ।  
 स तु तत्पदमाप्नोति यस्मादभूयो न जायते ।  
 विज्ञान-सारथिर्यस्तु मनः प्रगृह्णवान्नरः ।  
 सोऽप्यनः पारमाप्नोति तद्दिष्णोः परमम्पदम् ॥  
 इन्द्रियेभ्यः पराङ्मथ्या अर्थेभ्यश्च परं मनः ।  
 मनसश्च परा बुद्धिं बुद्धेरातृप्ता महान् परः  
 महतः परमव्यक्तमव्यक्तात् पुरुषः परः ।  
 पुरुषान्न परं किञ्चित् सा काष्ठासा परा गतिः ॥

२ ११ ।

"Know the self to be the charioteer and the body to be the chariot, the understanding to be the driver and the sensorium to be the reins. Wise men have described the senses to be horses, the objects taken into them to be the roads, and the self, endowed with the senses and the sensorium, to be the subject (lit. the 'enjoyer'). The senses of him who is unwise, with a mind always uncontrolled, are unmanageable like the naughty horses of a driver. The senses of him who is wise, with

a mind always under control, are manageable like the good horses of a driver. He who is unwise, of an uncontrolled mind, and always unholy, does not attain that (*i.e.* the highest) place, but attains mundane existence. He who is wise, of a controlled mind, and always holy, attains that place from which one is not born again. The man whose driver is wisdom, and whose reins consist of the sensorium, reaches the end of the path—the highest place of the All-pervading. The objects are superior to the senses, the understanding superior to the sensorium, and the great soul the cosmic soul—Brahmá) superior to the understanding. The Undeveloped (seed of the world) is superior to the great soul, and the Supreme Person superior to the undeveloped. There is nothing superior to the Person ; he is the end, the highest goal."

Now, it seems to me that as the author of the *Gita*, meditated on this passage of the *Kathopanishad*, the last part of which he reproduces in substance at the end of his third chapter, the idea of writing his great work arose in his mind. The body as a chariot, the individual self as the occupier, Reason or the Supreme Being as the driver of the chariot, the senses as horses, the world of sense as the road to be travelled over, the attainment of perfection by him who is guided by the voice of God in Reason and the misery of

him who trusts himself to the irrational guidance of his senses and sensuous impulses;—all these facts of the spiritual life seemed to him capable of being represented allegorically as Krishna driving the chariot of Arjuna and imparting to him the highest wisdom,—wisdom that should teach him not to trust himself to the guidance of momentary impulses, such as he might be conceived to feel at the first sight of the battle-field, but to follow the advice of him, Krishna, Arjuna's friend and the friend of the whole world. It may be that the story of Krishna's serving as Arjuna's charioteer and of his saying something to cheer and guide him at the beginning of the battle, had preceded the author of the *Gītā* and that the latter worked upon that story as a nucleus and developed it into a regular poem by drawing upon his own imagination and spiritual experiences. But whoever may have first conceived the fundamental idea of the poem, whether it was the author of the complete *Gītā* or some predecessor from whom he got it, the original source seems to have been the *Katha* passage extracted by me. The *Kāthopanishad* itself, I may remark by the way, owed its first inception to *Sukta* 135, *Mandala* x, of the *Rigveda*. It is thus—from the imagination of our earliest poets—that most of our later stories—those of the *Rāmāyana*, the *Mahā-*

*bhārata*, and the *Puranas*—have arisen. A true estimate of the value of our later literature and of its teachings cannot be formed without a study of the first product of our national genius, the *Rigveda*. Emerson says of Plato in his relation to later European writers, that he makes great havoc on their originalities. The same thing is true of the *Rigveda* in its relation to all later Hindu literature.

However, I have now answered the question proposed by me as to the belief of the author of the *Gītā* about Krishna. The answer briefly is that, probably he believed Krishna to be a historical person, perhaps even as an incarnation of God, but that the story of Krishna's uttering the *Gītā* in the battle-field as Arjuna's charioteer is a creation of his devout imagination. But how is such imagination justifiable in a pious man, such as the author of the *Gītā* undoubtedly was, if we are to judge him by the lofty teachings embodied in his work? How could he record his own thoughts and experiences as the words of God himself? Now, the answer to this question would also be the answer to the questions propounded by me first in this lecture, namely, "In what sense did Krishna, if he was a historical person, believe and declare himself as God incarnate?" and "In what sense did Arjuna, in case



he is historical, and the author of the *Bhagavad-gītā* accept Krishna as such a divine being?" These questions, therefore, I now proceed to answer.

My answer is that Krishna could declare himself, and Arjuna and the author of the *Gītā* could believe him, to be God incarnate only in the sense in which the national scriptures had taught them to do so. The representation of an individual as identical with the Universal Self, as we find it in the *Gītā*, is not a unique instance in our national literature. Since the days of the *Upanishads*, it has again and often been taught that the fully awakened soul, one which has been blessed with a knowledge of its true relation to the Absolute, sees that it is essentially one with the latter and fearlessly declares itself to be so. The typical and classical example is that of Indra in the *Kaushitaki Upanishad* in his colloquy with Pratar-dana. This is discussed and expounded in the *Vedānta Sūtras* and this exposition forms the accepted key to all declarations of identity with Brahman on the part of the *avatāras* in later Sanskrit literature. The *Sūtra's* exposition refers to the case of Vāmadeva in the *Rigveda*, implying that Vāmadeva spoke in the same spirit as Indra, and later writers all accept this reference as correct. But it seems to my humble judgment, that the author of the *Vedānta Sūtras* is here guilty of an

anachronism and credits old Vámadeva with a wisdom which he really did not possess. The exposition of the old texts of the *Rigveda* in the light of later philosophical knowledge is indeed a common practice with our ancient and mediæval commentators and expounders ; but this practice cannot be acceptable to those who have come to a definite conclusion as to the order in which the Hindu sacred books were composed and in which the different stages of Hindu thought were developed. To them the interpretation of Vámadeva's declaration of identity with Manu and Súrya in the light of the Monistic philosophy of the Upanishads must appear far-fetched and tortuous, for the simple fact that when that declaration was made or conceived, Hindu thought had not attained to the Monistic height to which it rose about the time the Upanishads were composed. The *Kaushítaki*, passage referred to, and other passages more or less similar to it in the Upanishads, specially the *Chhândogya* and the *Bṛihadáran'yaka*, must therefore be accepted as instances of the earliest recognition of the doctrine so prominently appearing in the *Gíta* that the fully awakened individual self can speak from the standpoint of and in the name of the Absolute Self. Before, however, I set before you the typical *Kaushítaki* passage, with its exposition by the author of the *Vedānta Sūtras*

and their chief commentator, Sankaráchárya, I shall quote and explain the *Rigveda* text which I pronounce useless for our purpose. It occurs in the 26th *sukta* of the 4th *mandala*, being the first *rik* of the *sukta*. In a footnote attached to the *sukta* in Mr. R. C. Datta's edition of the *Rigveda*, he says that it is declared by the ancient compilers as uttered in praise of the Self or Brahman by Vámadeva or Indra, but that there is really no mention of the Self anywhere in the hymn. In the first part of it, in the first three *riks*, Indra sings his own praises, already sung in several previous *riks*, and in the remaining four, Vámadeva speaks of the bringing of *soma* by Syena, the divine hawk. I transcribe the first three *riks* with a translation, in which I follow Mr. Datta's Bengali rendering. Reading them with an unbiassed mind, one feels no doubt of the correctness of Mr. Datta's interpretation.

अहं मनुरभवं सूर्यश्चाहं कक्षीवां ऋषिरस्मि विप्रः ।

अहं कुत्समाज्जुनेयं नृजेशहं कविरुशना पश्यता मा ॥ १ ॥

अहं भूमिमदादमार्थायाहं वृष्टिं दाशुषे मर्त्याय ।

अहमपो अनयं वावशाना मम देवासो अनुकेतमायन् ॥ २ ॥

अहं पुरो मंदसानो व्यैरं नव साकं नवतीः शंवरस्य ।

शततमं वेश्यं सर्वताता दिवोदासमतिथिगं यदावं ॥ ३ ॥

" I. I am Manu, I am Súrya, I am the learned sage Kakshibán. I have adorned the sage Kutsa,

the son of Arjuni. I am the wise Ushaná ; look at me. 2. I have given the world to the Arya. I have poured rain for sacrificing men. I have brought roaring waters. The devas follow my intention. 3. I, intoxicated with *soma*, have utterly destroyed many cities of Sambara. When I protected, in his sacrifices, Divodása, who entertained guests, I gave him a hundred cities."

I now come to the *Kaushitaki* passage which I have pronounced to be the real key to the truly sástric doctrine of divine incarnations. It forms the fourth chapter of the *Upanishad* and is in fact the most important chapter of the book. Of this chapter I say in the introduction to the second volume of my Devanagari and English edition of the Upanishads :

" In the person of Indra, liberated by the knowledge of his identity with Brahman, it teaches the unity of all things in an undivided consciousness. The Idealism it expounds is a most sound one, recognising in unmistakable terms the distinction and correlativity of both the subjective and objective aspects of Reality. Whatever may be said of the crudity of the language,—the language of an age in which refinement of expression could scarcely be expected,—it cannot justly be said, after reading this ancient exposition of Idealism, that the Idealism

of the Upanishads is a system of Subjective Idealism—a system which remained to be corrected and supplemented by modern European systems, as some European critics of Vedantism represent it.”

Now, I extract here only a small part—just what is necessary for our present purpose—of the dialogue between Indra and Pratardana, and then proceed to Sankara's comment on it in his commentary the *Vedānta Sūtras* :

प्रतर्ह्नो ह देवोदासिरिन्द्रस्य प्रियं धाम उपजगाम युद्धेन च  
पौरुषेण च । तं हेन्द्र उवाच । प्रतर्ह्नं वरं ते ददानीति । स  
होवाच प्रतर्ह्नः । तमेव मे वृणीष्व यं तं मनुष्याय हिततमं मनस  
इति । तं हेन्द्र उवाच । न वै वरोऽवरस्यै वृणीते तमेव वृणी-  
ष्वेत्येवमवरो वै किल म इति होवाच प्रतर्ह्नोऽथ खल्विन्द्रः सत्यादेव  
नेषाय । सत्यं हीन्द्रः । सहोवाच । मामेव विजानीह्येतदेवाहं  
मनुष्याय हिततमं मनस । यन्मां विजानीयात् ।.....स होवाच  
प्राणोऽस्मि प्रज्ञात्मा तं मामायुरमृतमित्युपास्व । आयुः प्राणः ।  
प्राणो वा आयुः । प्राण एवामृतम् । यावद्व्यास्मिन् शरीरे प्राणो  
वसति तावदायुः । प्राणेन ह्येवासुस्मिह्लोके अमृततमाप्नोति । प्रज्ञया  
सत्यं संकल्पम् । स यो मामायुरमृतमित्युपास्ते सर्वमायुरस्मिह्लोके  
एति । आप्नोत्यमृततममक्षितिं स्वर्गं लोके ।

That is, “Pratardana, the son of Divodāsa, went to the beloved abode of Indra by means of fighting and strength. To him said Indra, ‘Pratardana, let me grant you a boon.’ Pratardana said, ‘Do thou

choose one for me, one which thou deemest to be the most beneficial to man.' Indra said to him, 'No one chooses a boon for another. Do thou choose for yourself.' Pratardana said, 'In that case that boon would be no boon to me.' Now, Indra did not swerve (from his promise to grant a boon), for Indra is truth itself. He said, 'Know me. This I consider to be the most beneficial thing for man that he should know me.....I am the vital breath. I am the conscious self. Worship me as life, as breath. Life is breath and breath is life. Breath itself is immortality. For life lasts so long as breath exists in the body. It is by the vital breath that one obtains immortality in the other world. By reason he obtains true conception. He who worships me as life, as immortality, obtains full life in this world. He obtains immortality and indestructibility in the heavenly regions.' "

Now, I have already referred at some length to the exposition and discussion of this passage in the *Vedānta Sūtras*. The discussion extends to four aphorisms, 28th to 31st, of the first *pāda*, first chapter, of the *Sūtras*. The main object is to show that the 'Prāna' mentioned in the *Kaushītaki* passage means not any individual person or thing, but the Supreme Brahman. To obviate the objection that in case 'Prāna' stood for

Brahman, Indra would not have spoken of himself as 'Prána' as he does in the passage, the 30th aphorism says :

“शास्त्रदृष्ट्यानुपदेशो वामदेववत्” ।

That is, “Indra speaks of himself as Prána by looking on himself with a sight enlightened by the scriptures, as Vámadeva did.”

In exposition of this aphorism, Sankara says :

इन्द्रो नाम देवतात्मा स्वमात्मानं परमात्मनो नष्टाद्देव परं ब्रह्मेत्या-  
ख्येन दर्शनेन यथाशास्त्रं पश्यन्नुपदिशति स्व मामेव विजानीहीति । यथा  
तच्चैतत् पश्यन् ऋषिर्वाग्देवः प्रतिपेदेहं मनुरभवं सूर्याख्येति तद्वत् ।  
तद यो यो देवानां प्रत्यबुध्यत स एव तद भवदिति श्रुतेः ।

That is, “Indra, a deva, looking on his own self as the Supreme Brahman by the vision of the sages, according to the *sāstras*, says ‘Know me,’ just as the sage Vámadeva, seeing the same truth, felt, ‘I am Manu, I am Súra.’ In the Sruti, (*i.e.* the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*) it is said, ‘The worshipper becomes one with the god he truly sees’ ”

Here, then, is the *Gītā* doctrine of the Logos, the manifestation of God in the fully awakened man which enables him to see that God is his very self, and makes him speak in his ‘name.’ It is from this standpoint, in the light of this consciousness of the indwelling Spirit of God, that Krishna, or the author of the *Gītā* personating himself as Krishna,

speaks throughout the book. In thus speaking in the name of Krishna, the author of the *Bhagavad-gītā* does not perpetrate a fraud, for Krishna to him is not an individual different from other individuals, but the Universal Spirit living as the Inner Self—*Antar Atmā*—of every rational being. In uttering his lofty teachings, he attempts to transcend the limitations of his finite individuality and speak from the standpoint of the Absolute, the Infinite. That the Krishna of the *Bhagavad-gītā* ignores his finite individuality, all that belongs to him as a particular person living and moving in a particular time, at a particular place, and under particular circumstances, and speaks from the standpoint of the Universal Spirit which is in all,—a standpoint which every one possessing the needful enlightenment can occupy,—is evident more or less from every part of the *Gītā*. How to obtain this enlightenment, may be said to be the one question which the *Gītā* answers in various ways in all that it says on the higher life. I proceed to indicate some of the passages in which this truth is taught, the truth namely, that the divinity claimed by Krishna is the common reward of all earnest aspirants and devotees, that he who speaks to us as our teacher in the book is not a hero or demigod who once trod the earth and has now left it, and who spoke only to a favourite friend and disciple,



but that he is everywhere and in every one of us and is as ready to speak to us now as he ever was to any one else.

Now, the oft-quoted seventh and eighth verses of the fourth chapter seem indeed to teach a doctrine of special incarnation, the incarnation of the Supreme Being as a particular person, and are often cited as supporting that view. But read in the light of numerous other passages clearly bearing a different import, these texts will be found to be in no way opposed to the spirit of those passages. Krishna says :

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥

परिचाणाय माधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।

धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सन्भवामि युगे युगे ॥

“Whenever there is a decay of virtue, O Bhárata, and an ascendancy of vice, I create myself. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, and for the establishment of righteousness, I am born in every age.”

In the 6th verse Krishna had said :

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सेन ।

प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया ॥

“Though I am unborn, of an imperishable nature, and the lord of all things, yet, ruling

over my own nature, I am born through the power of my Máyá. ”.

Now, this verse throws light on the meaning of 'birth' as applying to God. It recognises that he cannot be born in the ordinary sense, that he cannot be limited or confined by the objects he upholds and regulates, and that he cannot be subject to, but must always transcend, Prakriti, Nature, that is, his own creative power, to which finite beings are subject. If he is said to be born, therefore, it must be in an extraordinary sense. The extraordinary sense is brought out by the phrase *ātmamāyayā*, through my Máyá power,—that divine power which makes possible what seems impossible to us. Sankara explains '*sambhavadmyātmamāyayā*' thus :

सम्भवामि देहवानिव भवामि जात इव, आत्ममायया आत्मनो  
मायया न परमार्थतो लोकावत् ।

“I am born, that is, I appear to be embodied, to be born, through my Máyá, but not in reality like ordinary beings.”

We see, then, in what sense birth and incarnation must be understood when they are applied to the Supreme Being. In the ordinary sense he is never born, he never incarnates himself, for those processes necessarily imply limitation. To take a body in the ordinary sense is to be limited

by the senses,—the *jñānedriyas*—in one's perceptions, and by the organs—the *karmendriyas*—in one's actions. Inasmuch as the Lord can never do this, even though he is omnipotent, for it involves an impossibility, a contradiction, as much as the circling of a square or the squaring of a circle, he is never born, he never incarnates himself. '*Atmānam srijāmyaham*' and '*Sambhavadmi*' in the seventh and eighth verses can therefore only mean manifestation and inspiration, and these processes imply relation to a finite consciousness. The Lord is eternally manifest to himself but when he is said to manifest himself at a particular time, on a particular occasion, this can take place only in relation to a finite being, one who is born and incarnated in the usual sense. Finite beings of ordinary power and insight do not know God truly. He, though present in them, is not manifest to them. They neither see him nor feel inspired by him, but only blindly believe in his presence in and around them. But when he manifests himself in a man of singularly keen insight and inspires him with his love and righteousness, then occur what we see in periods of spiritual upheaval,—the protection of the good, the destruction of evil-doers, that is, of evil itself, and the establishment of the kingdom of righteousness. When this divine manifestation and in-

spiration takes place in a man's life, he becomes divine—*Brahmībhūta*, in the phraseology of the *Gītā*,—spiritually absorbed and made one with God. He sees God within and without and sees nothing that can be separated from God, for he is, and is now clearly seen to be, all-in-all. That this *Brahmabhāva*—becoming divine—is possible to all, and has been attained by many, is admitted in almost the next verse, the tenth, of the same chapter, which says :

बीतरागभयक्रोधा मन्मथा भामुपाश्रिताः ।

बह्वो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः ॥

That is "Free from passion, fear and anger, absorbed in me, taking refuge in me, purified by the fire of wisdom, many have attained my state."

That those who are thus made divine—*Brahmībhūtāḥ*—by spiritual absorption in God, do not in any sense become extinct and are not lost in God in the sense of physical absorption or merging, is clear, if it were not so already from the plural number used by Krishna or the author of the *Gītā* in speaking of them. As we have already seen, the manifestation of God as a process necessarily implies his relation to a finite spiritual being, one who, however dependent on him, must nevertheless be distinguishable from him. As we shall see more clearly the further we proceed in the studies we

have undertaken, an unqualified Dualism or an unqualified Monism solves no problem either of philosophy or of religion. Unity and difference are found to be inextricably involved in all phases of life and reality, and it is a source of great satisfaction to find the author of the *Bhagavadgītā* alive to this truth in every part of his noble treatise. Even in his Krishna, of whom he throughout speaks as the Absolute, he admits by implication, as we shall see later on, the existence of a finite individuality.

However, proceeding farther and coming to the sixth chapter, we find there Krishna teaching us how to concentrate our thoughts on him and describing, as far as it can be described, the result of this concentration. To my mind, this description of *dhyāna-yoga* makes it clear, more than any other passage in the *Gītā*, what the author means by 'Krishna.' It is not any historical person whose exploits are sung in the ancient poems that we are told to think of. Nor is it any external deity, any not-self, however great and glorious, that we are directed to believe and imagine as keeping us company. What we are told to do, is to draw away our thoughts at the first instance from all external things, all things imagined as external,—for there are really no external or extra-mental things according to the *Gītā*—and to fix

them on what we call our own self, what in us is the centre and source of all thought and knowledge. We are told to see the Self by the self and to rejoice in the Self. We are to be in that condition

यन्नोपरमते चित्तं निरुद्धं योगसेवया ।

यच्च चैवात्मनात्मानं पश्यन्नात्मनि तुष्यति ॥ २० ॥

"in which the mind, restrained by concentration, becomes quiet, and seeing the Self by the self, rejoices in the Self." Slowly, but with a firm resolution, drawing our mind away from its wanderings, we are to fix it on the Self and not to think of anything else.

अनैः अनैरुपरमेद् बुद्ध्या दृष्टिगृहीतया ।

आत्मसंख्यं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥ २१ ॥

When, by such deep concentration and undisturbed introspection, the true nature of the Self has been realised, *dhyāna-yoga* is said to be complete. It is said to be a state of intense joy,

यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।

यस्मिन् स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते ॥ २२ ॥

"Having gained which, no other gain is thought to be greater ; established in which, one is not moved even by a serious affliction." It is a state in which the Absolute is not merely seen—one can see an object conceived as distant from or out of

touch with oneself—but is actually touched,—touching is the most appropriate word which the author of the *Gītā* finds for expressing our direct perception of the Supreme Reality.

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी विगत-कल्लषः ।

मुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ॥ २८ ॥

“Thus always concentrating his mind, the *yogin*, freed from sin, enjoys with ease the intense joy of touching Brahman.” Now, when the true nature of the self has thus been seen by direct vision, it can no more appear, as it does to those to whom such *yoga* is unknown, a small thing confined to the body. It then appears in its true nature as all-pervading, as the common Self of all rational and sentient beings. The *yogin* therefore sees the Self, his own true self, everywhere, and in his dealings with others, in thinking of them, speaking to them, and behaving with them, becomes more and more altruistic, for, seeing the same self everywhere, the joys and sorrows of others become his own joys and sorrows. So the Krishna of the *Gītā* says :

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।

ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।

तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकहृदयास्थितः ।

सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥

आत्मैषमन्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽबुधः ।

सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ २१—२२ ॥

"He whose mind has been steadied by meditation, who looks on everything with an impartial eye, sees the Self in everything and everything in the Self. He who sees me in everything and everything in me, never loses sight of me, and I never lose sight of him. (That is, I always bless him by revealing myself to him.) He who, established in unity, worships me as existing in all things, lives in me, in whatever condition he may be. He who looks on all joys and sorrows as his own, is deemed the highest *yogi*."

Coming to the seventh chapter, we find Krishna describing the objective world, both gross and subtle, as his *aparā prakṛiti*, lower nature ; and the subjective world, the world of consciousness, as his *parā prakṛiti*, higher nature. He says :—

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरिव च ।

अहंकार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥

अपरेयमितस्त्वनारां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम् ।

जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत् ॥ ४, ५ ॥

"Earth, water, fire, air, ether, sensorium, understanding and egoism—this is my nature divided eight-fold. This is my lower nature. Now hear of my higher nature, O mighty-armed,—it is that



which has become the individual self—that by which this phenomenal world is supported.”

In the tenth chapter, Krishna enumerates a number of prominent objects in nature and prominent persons in history, as he conceives history, and identifies himself with them. But he does not forget that these are only his more prominent manifestations, and that things not prominent are also his parts or manifestations ; and so at the end of the chapter he says :—

यद् यद्विभूतिमत् सत् श्रीमदुज्जितमेव वा ।

तत्तदेवावगच्छ त् मम तेजोऽशंसवन्मम् ॥

अथवा बहुनेतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवाज्जुन ।

विष्टमग्राहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकाग्र्येण स्थितो जगत् ॥ ४१, ४२ ॥

“Whatever is glorious, beautiful and strong, know that to be a product or part of my power. Or, what is the use of your learning these in detail ? Just learn that I stand supporting all this by a portion of myself.”

In the eleventh chapter, in some respects the most remarkable chapter of the book, Krishna reveals himself to Arjuna in his *visvarupam*, world-form. Historically, the chapter is of course worthless, the occurrence related being not only miraculous, but positively impossible. No human *guru*, however great, could show to his disciple the whole world, or even such a small portion of it as a battle-field, in

his own person. It must be seen, if it is seen at all, in one's own self. But spiritually, as a record of spiritual experience couched in poetic language, it is of inestimable value. To see the world *in* God, specially that scene of the world-drama in which we ourselves and those with whom we have to deal are actors, is an experience which most people in the world never have in the course of their whole life, but the value of which is so great, that even momentary glimpses of it serve as landmarks or sign-posts in the journey of life. Well does Krishna say to Arjuna :—

न तु मां शक्यते द्रष्टुं मनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा ।

दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमेश्वरम् ॥ ९

“But you cannot see me with these eyes of yours. I give you a divine eye; see my divine glory.”

The imparting of such a power of God-vision could not of course take place in a moment. It comes only by days, months and years of thought, study and devotional exercises. But it is after all the gift of God, as the *Gītā* truly represents it to be,—the toilsome process of struggle and aspiration on the part of the aspirant being the channel through which the current of divine grace flows in.

However, we now see what or who the Krishna of the *Bhagavadgītā* is, and what or who he is not.

We are not to seek him at Brindában or Mathurá, Kurukshetra or Dváraká. Even granting that an individual named Krishna lived and moved in these places at a certain period of the world's history, we have nothing to do with that individual. As an individual, he is only one of those millions of forms through which the Universal Spirit manifests itself. Even the author of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, to whom perhaps legend and history were one, mentions the individual Krishna as only one of many forms co-ordinately with his disciple, Arjuna :—

वृष्णीनां वासुदेवोऽस्मि पाण्डवानां धनञ्जयः ।

“I am Vāsudeva among the Vrishnis and Dhananjaya among the Pándavas.” (X. 37)”

The author never tells us to meditate on the exploits of the legendary Krishna. In the spirit of the *rishis* of the Upanishads, he tells us, as we have seen, to seek God within us, and when we have found him there, to seek him without us. And really, when we see him within, we see him without too, for when he has been truly seen, within and without have become one. We may then see him in history too—in true history, not in myth and miracle, for these do not represent, but rather misrepresent, him. We may and should see him in history when we have learnt to read history,—to distinguish between the divine and the human

part in it, between human errors and sins on the one hand, and on the other the divine wisdom and holiness which are gradually manifested through them. To confuse the human and the divine, the imperfect and the perfect, is not—as it seems to some of our ancient and mediæval writers,—the height of wisdom. It is the result of a blurred and distorted vision of the truth. The *Gītā* itself is not quite free from this error, as we shall see in the course of our present study. True wisdom lies not in equalising or denying the existence of opposites •like good and evil, divine and human, perfect and imperfect, infinite and finite, and so on, but in freely recognising and successfully reconciling them. We shall see that the *Gītā*, notwithstanding its minor defects, is a valuable help towards the attainment of this wisdom.

Now, I never expected, when I began to set forth, in this lecture, the Hindu doctrine of the Logos, that I should be able to state it so as to command either • your clear apprehension or your full conviction, and to free it from difficulties. Even if this could at all be done, it would not be possible to do so in the course of a single address. The doctrine, that what each one of us calls our own self, is, in its reality and fullness, the Supreme Self, the Self of the world, is a

doctrine which I have set forth at some length and in a reasoned form in three of my works, *Brāhmajijñāṣā*, *The Vedānta and its Relation to Modern Thought*, and *The Philosophy of Brāhmaism*. And if I am permitted, I shall try to give a fresh reasoned statement of the doctrine in the course of the following lectures. What I have said today is that this doctrine is really the scriptural Hindu doctrine of the Logos set forth in the *Bhagavad-gītā* in a very imposing form. When we realise the Supreme Self as our own self, we become entitled to speak in its name as Krishna does in the *Gītā*. But such realisation does not extinguish our individuality, our finiteness, for though the divine presence, the tide of the divine life, fills us in these moments, it does not exhaust itself, does not fully manifest itself, in us. Its fullness is and will ever remain ideal and potential to us. This truth, however, is not explicitly recognised in *Bhagavad-gītā*. But though not explicitly, the *Gītā* recognises it implicitly by teaching that even in the highest stages of wisdom, *bhakti* or reverential love to God remains ever as an element in it,—a truth which Absolute Monists do not recognise. Krishna never teaches Arjuna to call himself Krishna. Arjuna is always Arjuna, always the worshipper of Krishna, loving him

and loved of him, but never Krishna himself. This means that the finite, as finite, is never the Infinite, but always the child of the Infinite. The Krishna of the *Bhagavadgītā*, when truly understood, is seen to be the Infinite and the Absolute in us ; and the Arjuna of the *Bhagavadgītā*, when similarly understood, is seen to be the finite and the relative in us. That the finite, even in the most exalted of men, sometimes misses the presence of the Infinite in it, is explicitly recognised in the *Anugītā*, as I showed in my second lecture. Krishna, when asked by Arjuna at the end of the war to repeat what he had told him at its commencement, confesses that he has lost the state of *yoga* in which he uttered those lofty sayings, and cannot therefore repeat them fully. Christianity recognises this truth by making the Son of God exclaim on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" I am sorry, however, that the limits of this lecture forbid the very tempting task of expounding the Christian doctrine of the Logos as set forth in the fourth gospel and the epistles of St. Paul, and comparing it with the Hindu doctrine.\* I simply content myself with quoting, as a fit conclusion of my address, the grand though mystical words

in which the Evangelist John propounds his doctrine, a doctrine which, when properly understood, will be found profoundly true and will lead to a cessation of the long-standing feud between Hinduism and Christianity. He says :—

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him ; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. In him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness ; and the darkness apprehended it not ... There was the true light even the light, which lighteth every man, coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name ; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father) full of grace and truth.”

Dear Brethren, the Word is still with us and will ever be with us. May we know him and be united to him for ever and ever !

## LECTURE IV

### The Relation of the *Bhagavadgita* to the Sāṅkhya Philosophy

With the present lecture, the fourth of our series, we enter into the real system of the *Gītā*, call it a religion or a philosophy, whatever you will. In India, if not more or less in all countries, religion and philosophy have always been closely allied. Ultimately too, in the light of final analysis, the two are found to be not only allied, but really one. They know little of either who would part them, and who get enthusiastic over the separation of dogma from real religion. No religion, be it the barest and dryest ethicalism, is possible without a creed which satisfies the intellect, that is, without a philosophy, however rudimentary or imperfect it may be. However, we have seen in our third lecture how the author of the *Gītā*, whoever he may be, tries, at the very beginning of his exposition of his system, to set aside all individuality, all that is personal, temporal sectarian or racial in him, to rise above time, space and circumstance, and to place himself on the standpoint of the Logos, of the divine in him, and think and speak from



that standpoint. Well were it if it were more generally recognised in religious circles, that, *that* is the true standpoint from which every teacher should try to speak. Alas, how little is it recognised and how numerous are the instances in which ignorant egotism preaches itself instead of preaching God, and far from trying to realise the divine standpoint, ignores even the possibility of realising it. However, we have seen that though at times it is possible for the finite to be filled by the Infinite, the finite remains finite all the same and cannot know, as it cannot be, all. It may be that in its moments of inspiration, of *Brahmī Sthiti*, in the language of the *Gītā*, it sees the truth, and nothing but the truth, but it is impossible for it to see all truth, truth as it is in its totality. And if all truth is not seen, if what is seen is not seen in all its relations, the possibility of error remains. As we have seen, the author of the *Gītā* indirectly recognises in its doctrine of *Bhakti* the permanent existence of the finite in the Infinite, and in the *Anugīt*, the *Mahābhārata* recognises that even the most divine of human beings may come down from the lofty pedestal of *Brahma-yoga* and think and feel as the uninspired and the unenlightened. In the *Gītā* itself this is not clearly recognised. Its tone throughout is positive, confident and unhesitating. Nowhere is the speaker betrayed into the

admission that it is possible for him to err. He professes to give us the truth and nothing but the truth about our duties and our relation to God and Nature. As I have already pointed out in my first lecture, this forms both the charm and the danger of the *Gītā*, having helped to propagate and perpetuate both its truths and its errors. The world however, has, on the whole, grown wiser and more prudent since the *Gītā* was written, and however we may value it, treatises and even detached and occasional utterances in the bold and positive tone assumed and maintained in it would be intolerable in these days in the most devout circles and communities, at any rate among those which have shared in the liberal scientific and literary culture of the age. And the reason for this intolerance is clear. It is not only the possibility of error even in the inspired, but the growing recognition of the fact, not so clearly recognised in days gone by, that unless the Logos, God in man, directly reveals a truth to a person, it is needless, nay even harmful, to din it in his ears in the name of God. The true service to him is to help him to purify his heart and cultivate his understanding, and to appeal, not to his credulity, but to his Reason, the manifestation of the Supreme Reason in him. Not only, therefore, do we think that the positive and authoritative tone of the *Gītā* is not to

be imitated, but we submit the *Gītā* system and all other systems, whatever may be their pretensions, to the criticism of our own Reason, for we see, perhaps more clearly than was seen in any age previous to ours, that what we call our own Reason is not a private property of our own, but the Supreme Reason itself, manifested under limitations indeed, but through fixed laws unalterable by individual fancies,—laws which we are to discover by patient, steady and faithful labour in the field of thought. In doing this we but follow the spirit of the *Gītā* itself, for its author too seems to have done the same with the systems which he tries to harmonise in his. He could hardly have tried this task without passing these systems through a process of criticism, for in assimilating them, or rather parts or aspects of them, into his own system, he really transforms them and interprets them in his own light. But his method or manner throughout is a positive and dogmatic one, as I have already said, one which we must not imitate. In our dealings with his system, and the system with which he deals, our method shall be, as it ought to be, critical,—the method that proceeds by analysis and synthesis,—analysing things and thoughts, and seeing both their unity and difference. The first Indian system, historically, that recognised this method with any clearness, is the Sankhya,

and even now, after so much has been thought and said in Philosophy, it holds a very high place, next only to the Vedanta, in the estimation of Indian thinkers and foreign thinkers acquainted with our systems of thought. The Vedanta, though it reasons a good deal, is overburdened with constant appeals to the authority of the *Srutis*, while with the Sankhya, though it recognises the *Sruti* as a distinct source of knowledge, the chief reliance is on Perception and Inference. But though recognising Reason as the chief authority on matters philosophical, the Sankhya, as it has reached us, affords us little insight into the processes of thought through which it arrived at its conclusions. For the most part we are left to our own guesses as to these processes, and as for me, I must confess that if I knew nothing of western systems more or less similar in their conclusions to the Sankhya, I could hardly have understood even the little of it I seem to understand and should far less have felt the profound respect I feel for its founder. This respect for the founder of the Sankhya Philosophy is almost unbounded in our philosophical writers, to whatever school they may belong. And every school is deeply influenced by the system and has incorporated its ideas more or less. But in spite of this deep appreciation of it, very little that can satisfy a student trained

under modern western methods has been written on it. The cause seems to be twofold. The chief cause appears to be the utter loss of much valuable thought, since the first Sankhya philosopher or philosophers uttered it, in those long periods of our history which preceded the invention, and the introduction into this country, of the art of writing. The other cause seems to be blind reverence for a great thinker, and the consequent dogmatism, both of which content people with a mere passive acceptance and unreasoned enunciation of his sayings. If however, this is the case with writers professing to be philosophers, what can we expect from the author of the *Gītā*, a work prophetic and semi-poetic throughout in its form? It is deeply impregnated with Sankhya ideas, but it accepts and propounds these ideas in a dogmatic fashion. If we must understand anything of these, we must seek light from men who have tried to throw light on them, with however little a success, and must supplement what is wanting in them by our own light, light which we may have borrowed directly or indirectly from foreign sources. As I have already hinted, the Sankhya Philosophy must have existed for a long time as a system of thought unembodied in any written records. It must be one of those systems which were inspired by the thoughts and utterances of our earliest thinkers,

the *rīshis* of the *Upanishads*, and may have been embodied in oral unwritten treatises like them not far removed from the time of their composition. But such treatises, if they at all existed, seem never to have been reduced to writing like the *Upanishads* and the *Pūrva* and *Uttara Mīmāṃsā Sūtras*. Or, if they were, they seem to have been lost, as none have come down to us. The three chief existing authorities on the system all belong to comparatively modern times. They are, in chronological order, the *Tattva-samāsa*, the *Sāṅkhya Kārikā* and the *Sāṅkhya Prabachana*. From certain statements in them, it appears that they all drew their materials from an original source, perhaps an unwritten treatise in the form of *Sūtras*, but no trace of that treatise can now be found. It seems probable that some of the verses of the *Kārikā* and of the aphorisms of the *Prabachana* are partial reproductions of those *Sūtras* and that the latter, the *Prabachana*, preserves some of the old aphorisms in their entirety. Max Muller thinks that the *Sutra* portion of the *Tattva-samāsa* may be the original *Sāṅkhya Sūtras*, but portions of the book seem to be modern, and no date has yet been assigned to it. The *Kārikā* by Isvara Krishna is assigned by native tradition to the first century B. C., but is suspected by European antiquarians to be of later origin and to belong

perhaps to the sixth century A. D. The *Sāṅkhya Prabachana*, which is usually called the *Sāṅkhya Sūtras*, is supposed to have been written not earlier than the fourteenth century A. D. and may even belong to the sixteenth, when its chief commentator, Vijnāna-Bhikshu, whom some suspect to be its real author, lived. Of these three authoritative expositions of the Sankhya Philosophy, the *Kārikā* of Isvara Krishna, with its commentaries by Gourapāda and Vāchashpati Misra, command the greatest respect, and in the brief exposition of the philosophy that follows I shall rely chiefly on Isvara Krishna as interpreted by Gourapāda, but I shall occasionally refer to the *Sāṅkhya Prabachana* also and its commentary by Vijnāna Bhikshu.

In Kapila, the founder of the Sankhya Philosophy, the crass Dualism of popular thought, the dualism of thoughts and things, seems to have been fully broken down. The Dualism we find in him is a philosophical doctrine and not the natural conclusion of unenlightened common sense. To the latter, the things that we perceive stand out as objects independent of the perceiving mind, and it believes that these objects exist just as they are perceived, whether any person perceives them or not. The contradiction involved in such thinking is not seen by the unenlightened mind, and it is curious that among those who are thus un-

touched by even the first ray of real philosophical light, are many who dabble in philosophy, expounding and criticising philosophical systems without a moment's suspicion of their incompetency for the task. The consciousness that in objects, as we perceive them, at least a large part is contributed by the perceiving mind, seems to be the very beginning of philosophy in the proper sense, and after this beginning has been made, almost the whole problem of philosophy,—of Metaphysical Philosophy at any rate—resolves itself into the question, what part of our experience is contributed by the subject, and what part by the object, if there be any object at all independent of the subject. It speaks highly of Kapila's philosophical insight that in the dim, pre-historic past of human progress, he grasped this problem,—a problem that that does not arise in the minds of many so called enlightened people even this twentieth century—and attempted to solve it in his own way. To him things seen, heard, touched, smelt and tasted are *not* objects independent of mind, they are, as it were, suffused all over with thought. He thinks indeed that there is an element in them which is independent of the knowing subject, but he knows full well that the existence of this independent Reality may be doubted. He admits that it is not an object of perception, but that its existence has to be inferred



from the existence of perceived objects. His arguments for the existence of this Reality, which he calls '*Prakṛiti*', constitute his 'Dualism and his refutation of Vedantic Idealism. This word '*Prakṛiti*' is mistranslated 'Nature,' for Nature means the perceived world, whereas that world is to Kapila not *Prakṛiti*, but *Vikṛiti*,—not the ultimate objective reality as it is in itself, but as it appears to the subject. Perhaps 'the thing in itself' or objective noumenon, would be a nearer equivalent to *Prakṛiti* 'than the utterly misleading word,' 'Nature', though there seems to be no word in English that fully expresses the idea Kapila conveys by this term in his system. However, like his *Prakṛiti*, his *Purusha*, soul or subject, is also an inferred reality. It may be called in English the 'subjective noumenon.' But though a noumenon, Kapila carefully distinguishes it from *Prakṛiti*, for, unlike the latter, it never undergoes any change, but is an unchanged witness of changes. Implied in all changes as their witness, it is unchangeable, and in that sense inactive. The changes all belong to *Prakṛiti*, which is active, the sole agent of all change in the perceived world. But her activity implies and is impossible without her union with *Purusha*. Her activities are all phenomena, appearances, in the literal sense, and imply a permanent subject to whom they appear,

for whom they exist. Though she is unconscious, her actions are all purposive, and are intended for the enjoyment and ultimate liberation of the soul, and this purposiveness, too, of Prakriti's actions implies the existence of the soul. I wonder if this aspect of the Sankhya Philosophy, the teleological interpretation Kapila put on Prakriti's actions, has ever drawn the attention of his critics, and whether he has ever been seriously asked what consistency there is between Prakriti's alleged unconsciousness and her purposive action. However, reserving this question for future consideration, let us now have Kapila's views on the perceived world, Nature as it appears to us,—Nature as it is evolved out of the temporary union of Prakriti and Purusha,—temporary, because Purusha is destined, as we shall see by and by, to get rid of this union, which is his bondage, and attain *kaivalya*, isolation or aloneness, which is his true liberation. Between Prakriti on the one hand and Purusha on the other, lie twenty-three evolutes or phenomenal objects, seven of which are both causes and effects, and sixteen only effects. The first product of Prakriti's union with Purusha is *Mahat* or *Buddhi*, which Kapila seems to take in the sense of vague, undefined consciousness, consciousness which, though containing the germ of all differentiations, that of subject and object and others arising out

of it, is yet practically homogeneous, undifferentiated. The child, before it becomes self-conscious and conscious of the world in its infinite variety, may be supposed to be only vaguely conscious of its first contact with the forces of Nature. Out of this vague consciousness, arises *ahankāra*, the sense of I, egoism or self-consciousness. This has for its correlate the consciousness of the non-ego, of objects, but at first only in a vague, general way, as the consciousness of *mere some things*, and as this vague consciousness of objects subsequently develops into that of five gross objects, *rūpa, rasa, gandha, sabda*, and *spārsha*,—colour, taste, smell, sound and touch,—it is already called *pancha tan-mātrās*, five generic notions of things, or notions of five generic things. But the consciousness of these five generic things imply five corresponding organs of perception, the powers of seeing, tasting, smelling, hearing, and touching, and a common sensibility of which they are modifications or expressions. Hence we get *manas* and *pancha jñānendriyāni*, the sensorium and the five senses. With them come also the five powers of action, *pancha karmendriyāni*, finding expression in the hands, the feet, the voice, the organ of excretion, and that of generation. And then come the five gross objects, the *pancha mahābhūtāni*, already named, thus completing, with the *manas* and the ten perceptive and active or-

gans, the sixteen *Vikritayah*, effects. The other seven *Vikritis*,—*Buddhí*, *Ahankāra*, and the five *Tanmātrās*—are both *Prakritis* and *Vikritis*, causes and effects. They are effects, because they proceed from the original *Prakriti* and the rest in a descending scale, that is, *Buddhi* from *Prakriti* or *Pradhāna* (the other name for *Prakriti*). *Ahankāra* from *Buddhi*, and the *Pancha Tanmātrās* from *Ahankāra*. And they are causes, because *Buddhi* gives rise to *Ahankāra*, *Ahankāra* to the *Pancha Tanmātrās*, and these last to the other *Vikritis* or effects. Thus we have the twenty-five principles or categories, *pancha-vimsati tattvāni*, from the enumeration or exposition of which—*sāṅkhya* meaning both enumeration and exposition.—the Sankhya Philosophy derives its name. There are thirty-five more categories of a subordinate grade, all making sixty, from which the system is also called the *Shashthi Tantram*. The subordinate categories relate mostly to *sādhana* or practice, and need not detain us. The object of the system is to impart saving knowledge,—knowledge leading to liberation, the severance of bondage, which, as I have already said, consists in the union of *Prakriti* and *Purusha*, a state in which pain preponderates. But how can knowledge, a purely intellectual affair, effect the disunion of *Prakriti* and *Purusha*? The Sankhya

answer to this question is that the union being not a real, but a fancied one, it can be effected by knowledge and knowledge alone. The twenty-three principles which constitute the perceived world, and which seem to bind Purusha to Prakriti, are all products of illusion, an illusion produced on Purusha by Prakriti. This illusion is and can be dissipated only by a true knowledge, on the part of Purusha, of his own real nature, and this knowledge Prakriti herself helps him to acquire. In fact the birth, the innumerable transmigrations, with all the vicissitudes of joy and sorrow attending them, and the final liberation, all belong properly to Prakriti and not to Purusha, who all along remains untouched by these, but curiously enough fancies himself as subject to these changes. The phenomenon is compared to the apparent redness of a piece of unstained glass placed in proximity to a china rose, a red *javā* flower, which makes the glass seem red, though it is not really so. The similarity of this doctrine of illusion to Sankara's *Māyā* doctrine is evident. Both have their roots, no doubt, in certain passages of the *Upanishads*, specially of the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*. There was a time when the present division of Sankhya and Vedānta did not evidently exist, as appears from their union in the *Svetāśvatara* Upanishad. Even when the tendency to branch out into distinct currents.

appeared, there seem to have been thinkers, even from the earliest times, who denied that the two systems were incompatible with each other and sought to unite them in a harmonious whole. The author of the *Bhagavadgītā* seems to be one of the earliest of such thinkers, as Vijnāna Bhikshu is one of the latest. The three main points in which the Sankhya and the Vedānta seem to conflict with each other are (1) the Sankhya doctrine of the unconsciousness of Prakriti, as opposed to the Vedāntic doctrine that the primal cause is conscious ; (2) the Sankhya doctrine of a plurality of Purushas which seems to conflict with the Vedāntic doctrine of the non-duality of the Supreme Self and (3) the absence of any room for God in the Sankhya system as expounded in the *Tattva Saṁdāsa* and the *Kārikā*, and the pronouncement, in the *Sāṅkhya Pravachana*, of God being unproven, whereas in the Vedānta system, in all its different schools, God is all-in-all. Now, those who hold the Sankhya and the Vedānta systems to be not incompatible with each other and have tried to effect a harmony between them have done so in something like the following way. First, the unconsciousness of Prakriti is only apparent, *vyāvahārika*, and not real, *pāramārthika*. As I have already said, Kapila admits Prakriti's activities to be throughout purposive, a view quite inconsistent

with the doctrine of her unconsciousness. Secondly, the doctrine of a plurality of Purushas is not incompatible with a higher unity, a Higher Self, in which they are united. The doctrine of *Antaryāmin*, taught in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka* Upanishad, and emphasised in the philosophy of Ramanuja, brings out this higher, all-comprehensive unity. Thirdly, God, though not proven by the ordinary *pramāṇas*, evidences, which all imply the unproven ground of all proofs, is the datum of *ātmapratyaya*, self-intuition, which is the real meaning of *śabda* or *āptavachana*, recognised by Kapila himself as a distinct source of knowledge.

Now, those who are conversant with the Kantian Philosophy, will see that in its fundamental metaphysical ideas, the Sankhya system is a striking anticipation of that philosophy. The constitution of the phenomenal world, according to Kant, by the joint action of the thing-in-itself and the Ego, the receptivity of sense and the activity of Imagination and Apperception in forming into definite objects the matter of perception, have their parallels in the Sankhya conceptions of *Prakṛiti*, *Purusha*, *Buddhi*, *Āhankāra*, and *Manas*. The Kantian criticism of the ordinary proofs for God's existence was in a manner anticipated by the well-known Sankhya aphorisms beginning with "ईश्वरासिद्धेः",—"as God is unproven."

Even in practical philosophy and the ideal of moral perfection, there is a remote similarity between the 'Sankhyā doctrine of the Purusha finally realising his true nature, aloofness or isolation from Prakriti and her works, and the Kantian doctrine of the soul's true autonomy and its being really the denizen of a super-sensuous world. Of course it is idle to expect from a pre-historic philosopher like Kapila anything like that close analysis of mental phenomena and that exactness and thoroughness of method which characterise the great founder of the Critical Philosophy. Nor can the former be credited with that clear insight into the formative power of thought which finds expression in the writings of the great German philosopher and which has brought into existence the present idealistic movement in Europe, a movement that sees Kant's mistakes and inconsistencies by his own light and tries to make his system self-consistent. However, the chief object of my drawing a parallel, however faint, between the two systems, is to show that Kapila's inconsistencies can be, as they have been, in a manner, shown in the same way as those of Kant, since they too, are, like the positive doctrines of the two philosophers, of a similar nature and proceed from the same causes. In perception, the soul is, according to both Kant and



Kapila, passive, unable to produce its own sensations, and hence the necessity of postulating an active, external source of sensations, one which Kapila calls 'Prakriti' and Kant the 'Thing-in-itself.' Deny the soul's passivity, see that it is throughout active, and you cut the root of both the philosophers' Dualism. Again, causality or *kartitva* is a relation between things known—things within the world of perception and conception. It is illustrated by the well-known Sankhya example of the relation between fire and smoke, an example that may be acceptable to a Kantian too. Now, such a relation, as the critics of Kant have pointed out, cannot be projected out of the world of knowledge and supposed to hold good between a known and an unknown object. Kant and Kapila's inference, therefore, from perceived objects to an external thing-in-itself is invalid. The same argument applies to Mr. Herbert Spencer's Transfigured Realism, which doctrine, so far as it is related to the Kantian Dualism and Agnosticism, bears a faint likeness to the Sankhya system. His external Reality, as the cause of sensations, is reached by distorting the natural sense of *causality* and *externality*, which, from relations between things known, are projected in his system beyond the known world, and conceived as relations between

things known and unknown. However, I now proceed to set before you a number of passages from the *Sāṅkhya-Kārikā* and the *Sāṅkhya Sūtras*, with translations, to corroborate and supplement the exposition I have given you of the system, and then to show how far the author of the *Bhagavadgītā* accepts Sankhya doctrines and in what points he re-interprets and transforms them. In my translations of the *Kārikā*, I mainly follow Dr. Satischandra Banurji. But I prefer the original Sanskrit names of the *tattvas* to his translations of them. In his third verse. Isvara-krishna briefly enumerates and classifies the twenty-five categories:—

मूलप्रकृतिरविकृति मद्भदाद्याः प्रकृतिविकृतयः सप्त ।

षोडशकसु विकारो न प्रकृतिविकृतिः पुरुषः ॥

“Prakriti, the root, is no effect ; *Mahat* and the rest are seven, causing and caused; sixteen are mere effects; Purusha is neither a cause nor an effect.”

In verse II, a contrast is drawn between Prakriti and her effects on the one hand, and Purusha on the other.

त्रिगुणमविवेकि विषयः सामान्यमचेतनं प्रसवधर्म्भिः ।

व्यक्तं तथा प्रधानं तद्विपरीतस्तथा च पुमान् ॥

“The manifested, that is, every effect of Prakriti, is endowed with the three qualities

(*sattvam*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, goodness, passion and darkness), and is unintelligent, objective, generic, unconscious and productive. So also is Prakriti. In these respects, as in those, Purusha is the reverse."

The seventeenth verse states the arguments for the existence of Purusha :—

संघातपरार्थत्वात् त्रिगुणादिविपर्ययादधिष्ठानात् ।

पुरुषोऽस्ति भोक्तृभावात् कैवल्यार्थं प्रवृत्तेः ॥

"Since the assemblage (of sensible things) is for the sake of another, 'since there is a converse of the three *gunas* and the rest, since there must be superintendence (over the products of Prakriti), since there must be an experiencer, and since there is (in the world) a striving for isolation, Purusha exists."

The meaning of this verse will be better understood if I read to you in this connection my exposition of the 66th aphorism of the *Sāṅkhya Pravachana* from an unpublished manuscript of mine. The exposition is given in the light of Vijnāna Bhikshu's commentary. It is as follows : "The existence of the soul is inferred from the fact that all combinations are for the sake of another. The objects of Nature are all combinations of various elements, and all combinations are purposive,—made to serve

certain ends. But these ends cannot be the ends either of the elements combined or of primal Prakriti, for they are unintelligent, and ends can relate only to an intelligent being. There must therefore be an intelligent being or beings for whose pleasure and pain, virtue and vice, bondage and liberation, the objects of Nature exist."

The purposiveness of Prakriti's activity is brought out more clearly in verses 57—61, which also display some poetic beauty, something which people hardly expect from a philosopher. Says Isvarakrishna :—

वत्सविद्वद्भिनिमित्तं क्षीरस्य यथा पृवृत्तिरश्वस्य ।

पुरुषविमोक्ष-निमित्तं तथा पृवृत्तिः प्रधानस्य ॥ १

"As the secretion of the unintelligent milk is for the purpose of the calf's nourishment, so Prakriti's activity is for the purpose of Purusha's liberation."

श्रीतुमुक्त्यनिवृत्त्यर्थं यथा क्रियासु प्रवर्तते लोकः ।

पुरुषस्य विमोक्षार्थं प्रवर्तते तदव्यक्तम् ॥

"As people engage in works for the purpose of relieving desires, so does the unmanifested principle (i. e. Prakriti) for the purpose of Purusha's liberation."

रजस्य दशयिता निवर्तते नक्तकौ यथा नृत्यात् ।

पुरुषस्य तथात्मानं प्रकाशं विनिवर्तते प्रकृतिः ॥

“As a female dancer, having exhibited herself on the stage, desists from the dance, so does Prakriti cease to work when she has manifested herself to Purusha, (that is, when the latter has acquired a real knowledge of Prakriti and his distinction from her.)”

नानाविधैरुपायैरूपकारिण्यनुपकारिणः पुंसः ।

गुणवत्यगुणस्य सतस्तस्यार्थमपार्थकं चरति ॥

“Prakriti, generous and endowed with *gunas* (and thus active) accomplishes, by manifold means, and without benefit to herself, the purpose of the eternal Purusha, who is thankless and without *gunas* (and thus unable to act).”

प्रकृतेः सुकुमारतरं न किञ्चिदस्तीति मे मति भवति ।

या दृष्टासीति पुनर्न दर्शनमुपैति पुनरप्यस्य ॥

“My opinion is that nothing is more modest than Prakriti, who, knowing that she has been seen, does not appear again before Purusha.”

The illusoriness of bondage, transmigration and liberation, comes out clearly in verses 62—64. Thus,

तस्मान्नवध्यते नापि मुच्यते नापि संसरति कश्चित् ।

संसरति वध्यते मुच्यते च नानाश्रया प्रकृतिः ॥

“Wherefore no Purusha is bound, or is liberated, or migrated, it is Prakriti who in connection with

various Purushas, is bound, is released, and migrated.”

रूपैः सप्तभिरेव तु बद्धात्मात्मानमात्मना प्रकृतिः ।

सैव च पुरुषार्थं प्रति विमोचयत्येकरूपेण ॥

“By seven modes does Prakriti bind herself by herself, and by one mode does she free herself for the benefit of Purusha.” [The seven binding modes are virtue, dispassion, power, vice, ignorance, passion and weakness. The one liberating mode is knowledge.]

एवं तत्ताभ्यासाद्वाञ्छि न मे नाहमेत्यप्रशिष्यम् ।

अधिपयर्थायाद्विशुद्धं केवलमुत्पद्यते ज्ञानम् ॥

“Thus, by a study of the principles, is attained the final and absolute knowledge, pure, because free from doubt, that I am not, i. e. not an agent, nothing is mine, and that *aham*, the false, phenomenal ego, does not exist.

One sees here the germ of the Buddhist doctrine of *nirvāṇa*, whatever may be its real interpretation.

That the Sankhya system is pessimistic in its tendency, and aims at the dissolution of the world, will be evident from the following two verses—which will be the last that I shall quote—if this has not been clear to you from what I have already said. The 66th verse says :—

दृष्टामयेत्युपेक्षक एको दृष्टादृष्टेत्युपरमत्यन्या ।

सति संयोगेऽपि तयोः प्रयोजनं नास्ति संगस्य ॥

“The one (that is Purusha) becomes indifferent because he thinks ‘I have seen her,’ the other (that is Prakriti) desists from action because she thinks, ‘I have been seen,’ and so, notwithstanding their conjunction, there is no further need of evolution.”

The 68th verse describes the final separation of Purusha and Prakriti :—

प्राप्ते शरीरभेदे चरितार्थतात् प्रधाने विनिवृत्तौ ।

एकात्मिकमात्मन्तिकमुभयं कैवल्यमाप्नोति ॥

“When, owing to the gratification of ends, separation from the body takes place, and Prakriti ceases to act, Purusha obtains both absolute and final isolation.”

We shall see now how the theistic and therefore necessarily optimistic system of the *Bhagavad-gītā* wrestles with this atheistic and pessimistic system and in trying to reconcile itself with it, puts upon it an interpretation suited to its own purpose.

The *Gītā* is usually divided by the commentators into three *shatkas*, three parts, each consisting of six chapters. The first is called the *karma-shatka*, the second the *bhakti-shatka*, and the third

the *jñāna shatka*. This division cannot be pronounced exact, as *karma*, *bhakti* and *jñāna* are promiscuously dealt with in all the three *shatkas*. It could hardly be otherwise, as these elements of the religious life imply and depend upon one another, and can scarcely be treated of separately. According to some European writers on the *Gītā*, the original poem closed with the twelfth chapter, and the last six chapters are later additions. The internal evidence favours this view, for the first twelve chapters show a close connection and coherence which is absent in the last *shatka*. The transition from the twelfth chapter to the thirteenth seems abrupt, and this and the following chapters do not lead to one another as naturally as those of the first two *shatkas*. In the first *shatka*, *karma* indeed predominates over *jñāna* and *bhakti*; but in the second *shatka* there is as much *jñāna* at least as *bhakti*, and it cannot be called a merely or predominately *bhakti shatka*. The third *shatka*, as I have already said, deals with all three, *jñāna*, *bhakti*, and *karma*, specially with the first and last, and can be called a *jñāna shatka* only because it contains a description, not found in the other *shatkas*, of *jñāna* in its full and final form, *nishthā jñānasya yā parā*. However, in all his three *shatkas*, the author of the *Gītā*, supposing the book to have been written by a single person,



shows how deeply he is influenced by the Sankhya Philosophy. His doctrine of *karma* is, in the first place, a Sankhya doctrine, though gradually it also became a part of the later Vedanta system. In *karma*, work, we inevitably come into close contact with Prakriti, who thus binds us to her in proportion to the zeal, assiduity and intensity with which we work. Kapila, consistently with his doctrine that Prakriti is a perfect alien to Purusha, and that any contact with her is so much bondage to him, teaches absolute cessation from work as an essential condition of attaining liberation. This unqualified opposition to *karma* is shared by Sankara's school, which, though recognising Prakriti or Mâyá as a power of God, regards it as a power of producing illusions. The author of the *Gita* is not a Mâyávádin, not one, at least, of Sankara's type. Hence his difficulty in abjuring *karma* altogether. To him Prakriti is a power or aspect of God; contact with her, therefore, and a perpetuation of her activity are not, to him, as to the Sankhya and the Mâyávádin, absolute evils, and yet his Sankhya associations make him fret and froth, almost as much as both his opponents just named, against the bondage that Prakriti imposes upon us through work. His reconciliation of *karma*, which leads to bondage, and the pursuit of *kaivalya*, isolation from Prakriti,

consists in his doctrine of *nishkāma karma*, disinterested work, a doctrine which we shall discuss at length in a subsequent lecture of the present series. Here we are concerned simply with the question how much of Sankhya remains in the *Gītā* in propounding this reconciliation. The positive aspect of *nishkāma karma* is *karmārpanam* or *Brahmārpanam*, resigning work to God,—realising that the real agent is God, the Universal Self, and not the individual. But apart from the fact that the individual, as a part or aspect of the Universal, is so far an agent, and cannot reason itself out of agency, the other and real difficulty of the doctrine is that in attributing activity to the Self, even in its universal aspect, we directly go against the fundamental Sankhya doctrine of the essential inactivity of Purusha. The author of the *Gītā* knows this, and ever and anon, in his book, denies that the Self is really active. Of numerous such utterances I quote only three, almost at random. In the third chapter it is said :

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वंशः ।

अहंकारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥ २७ ॥

“Actions are done in all cases by the *gunas* or forces of Prakriti. One deluded by egotism thinks “I am the doer.”

Again, in the thirteenth chapter, it is said :

प्रकृत्यैव च कर्माणि क्रियमानाणि सर्वशः ।

यः पश्यति तथात्मानमकर्तारं स पश्यति ॥ २९ ॥

“He really sees who sees all actions as done by Prakriti alone, and the Self as a non-agent.”

That it is not the individual self alone, but the universal also, that is inactive, is clearly said in the same chapter, only a little below the above verse. It is said :—

अनादिताग्लिगुणतत् परमात्मायमव्ययः ।

शरीरस्थोऽपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते ॥ ३० ॥

“Being without beginning, without *gunas*, this imperishable Supreme Self, though in the body, does not, O son of Kunti, act, nor is it tainted or affected.”

But this Sankhya doctrine of the inactivity of the self is crossed and contradicted in numerous other passages by the truly Vedantic doctrine of an active God. These passages are so numerous and form such a prominent feature of the teachings of the *Gītā*, that I need not quote any. The tenth and eleventh chapters present this doctrine in the most striking form. The *Gītā*'s attempted reconciliation of the Sankhya and the Vedanta cannot therefore be pronounced quite successful. It appears to feel vaguely that the changing and unchanging, the *saguna* and *nirguna*, the objective and subjective

aspects of the divine nature are both real and therefore reconcilable; but it does not know where the reconciliation lies. How could it know? Like all ancient systems, eastern and western, it was governed by the logic of antithesis,—the logic that takes all distinctions as divisions and thus breaks up the world—the world both of thoughts and things—into irreconcilable opposites. The credit of the *Gītā* lies in the fact that it vaguely suggests a reconciliation and, in the ideal of spiritual life it sets forth, practically finds and realises it. This vague suggestion comes out here and there in the book, for instance in the beginning of the seventh chapter, where both the objective and subjective worlds are called God's *Prakritis*, natures, but the former characterized as *aparā*, lower, and the latter *parā*, higher. The author makes the Supreme Being say :

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।

अहंकार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥

अपरैर्यमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम् ।

जीवभूतां महाबाहो यथेदं धारयन्ते जगत् ॥ ४, ५ ॥

“Earth, water, fire, air, ether, *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahankāra*—this is my Prakriti divided eightfold. This is the lower. Learn that I have a higher Prakriti, that which appears in the form of the

individual soul, and by which this changeful world is supported."

The phrase "यदेदं धार्यते जगत्," "by which this changeful world is supported"—seems to show that the author had at least a vague apprehension of the true dialectic of thought,—of the fact that the subject both makes and overlaps the distinction of subject and object, and that its unity in difference is the true ultimate reality. But this truth is nowhere brought out clearly either in the text of the *Gītā* or in any of the principal commentaries on it, and remains as a mere suggestion. In chapter thirteen, subject and object, *kshetrajna* and *kshetra*, are clearly distinguished, and their close relation is also recognised in the verse :—

यावत् सञ्जायते किञ्चित् सत्त्वं स्यावरजद्रूपम् ।

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञ-संयोगात् तद्विद्धि भरतर्षभ ॥ २६ ॥

"Whatever being is born, be it moving or unmoving, know it to be, O best of the Bharatas, the result of the union of *kshetra* and *kshetrajna*."

Nothing, therefore, it would seem, is purely subjective or purely objective according to the author, everything having both a subjective and an objective aspect. But this truth is well-nigh forgotten when, in the same chapter, the author parcels out all existence, as it were, between *Prakriti* and *Purusha*, apportioning certain things

to the former and certain other things to the latter. For instance he says :

प्रकृतिं पुरुषश्चैव विद्वानादी उभावपि ।

विकारांश्च गुणांश्चैव विद्धि प्रकृतिसम्भवान् ॥ १९ ॥

कार्यकारणकर्तृ ते हेतुः प्रकृतिरुच्यते ।

पुरुषः सुखदुःखानां भोक्तृ त्वं हेतुरुच्यते ॥ २० ॥

“Know that Prakriti and Purusha are both without a beginning, and that all phenomena and all *gunas* are born of Prakriti. Of the production of cause and effect, Prakriti is the source; of the experience of pleasure and pain, Purusha is the source.”

The fact is, that notwithstanding his faith in the monistic Theism of the Upanishads, the author of the *Gita* cannot shake off his Sankhya predilections. In spite of himself, inspite of his repeated declaration that God is the sole agent in the world, the Sankhya Dualism of Prakriti and Purusha as two distinct factors of creation coming together and producing the phenomenal world by their union, ever and anon breaks in and stands in irreconcilable opposition to his Vedantism. And, as in his Metaphysics, so in his Ethics, in his practical as well as in his theoretical philosophy, the reconciliation of Sankhya and Vedanta is only partial and qualified. We have seen this already

with reference to his doctrine of *karma*. I now refer specially to his doctrine of liberation, which he calls by various names, *kaivalya*, *mukti*, *Brahmi-sthiti*, *Brahmabhāva*, *naishkarmya*, *nistraigunya* and so on. Our author's *kaivalya* is indeed very different from that of the Sankhya philosophers. Theirs has nothing to do with *Brahman*, *bhakti* and *karma*. But the *Gītā kaivalya* is *Brahma-bhava* itself, conscious union or unity with the Supreme Spirit; and it includes *bhakti* and *karma* both even in its highest stage. But how *bhakti* and *karma* are compatible with perfect freedom from the *gunas*, which is an essential condition of liberation, if not liberation itself, according to the *Gītā*, does not clearly appear. The doctrine of *gunas* as the primary constituents of Prakriti is a fundamental Sankhya doctrine. I have almost avoided it in my foregoing exposition of the Sankhya Philosophy on account of its abstruseness and the great variety of ways in which the Sankhya philosophers expound it. In a subsequent lecture of the present series, we shall see how the author of the *Gītā* expounds it. The exposition is given chiefly in its 14th chapter, and partly also in the 17th and 18th. Suffice it, however, to say here, as will have appeared from some of the *Gītā* verses I have already quoted, that the *gunas*, *sattvam*, *rajas* and *taṃas*, are credited with all activity, both

in the physical and the mental world. All phenomena, all changes, good, bad and middling, are traced to them. *Bhakti* and *karma*, then, whether they are *sāttvika*, *rājasika* or *tāmasika*, are impossible in the *nistraigunya* state described chiefly in the 14th chapter. To be quite free from the *gunas*, then, we must be, it would seem, without *bhakti* and *karma*, and properly speaking without *jñāna* too, for *jñāna* is a product, as Kapila says, and as the author of the *Gītā* too admits here and there, of *sattvam*, the first and best of the *gunas*. We see, then, that the *Gītā* doctrine of *kaivalya* is in conflict with the Sankhya doctrine of the *gunas* and that the *Gītā*'s attempt to reconcile Sankhya and Vedānta in this respect is not quite successful. But I think I have said enough for our present purpose to show that however high may be the authority of a work or a system, and in whatever reverence it may be held by its admirers, our attitude towards it must be one of reverent criticism, qualified appreciation, and cautious acceptance. The Sankhya and the *Gītā* are objects of admiration to me not as infallible or even self-consistent systems commanding implicit acceptance and satisfying all theoretical and practical doubts, but as deeply suggestive and helpful attempts at the solution of the great problems of thought and practical life, a solution in which Reason, as in me



and in all, informed and enlightened by the spirit of modern philosophy, must play the most important part. The *Gītā* is specially valuable to me as showing the way to that practical *yoga*, the direct communion of the individual with the Universal soul, which is the most important factor in the solution of religious problems. How far, in teaching the practice of *yoga*, it is influenced by the Yoga System of Philosophy as it existed at the time when it was written, and how far we can be helped by this philosophy as it has been taught by Patanjali, I meant to say in the course of this lecture, for the Yoga Philosophy professes to be only a particular school of the Sankhya system ; but I have not had time to do so. A lecture on the relation of the *Gītā* to the Yoga Philosophy, therefore, though not included in our original program as laid down in our published syllabus, seems necessary, and God willing, we shall take up that discussion in our next discourse.

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## LECTURE V

### *The Bhagavadgita and the Yoga System of Philosophy*

As promised in my last lecture, I proceed to show the relation of the *Bhagavadgītā* to the Yoga System of Philosophy. *Yoga*, as a system of spiritual discipline, seems to be very ancient. We find it outlined, though not named as a distinct system, in the earliest *Upanishads*, the *Chhāndogyā*, the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, the *Aitareya*, the *Taittirīya* and the *Kaushītaki*. In the verse *Upanishads*, the *Kātha* and the *Svetāśvatara* for instance, which are later, and perhaps belong to the earlier *Sūtra* period, the system is actually named, and in the latter, even takes a definite shape. In the *Gītā* it appears in a fuller form. But all this appears to be anterior to the composition of the Pātaṅjala aphorisms, in which the system appears in its fully developed form and as a distinct school of philosophy. Patañjali, the author of the aphorisms, is not perhaps a very ancient thinker. If he were so, he would perhaps have been mentioned in the *Gītā*, like Vyāsa and Kapila, as a Divine *vibhūti*. The date of Patañjali, the writer of the great commentary, *Mahābhāṣya*, on Pāṇini, has been

definitely fixed as the second century B.C. As I said in my first lecture, he probably lived during the reign of Pushpamitra, which lasted from 178 to 142 B.C. Now, if the Patanjali of the *Mahābhāṣya* is the same as the Patanjali of the *Yoga* aphorisms, we have almost as definite a piece of information about the time of our philosopher as we could expect to have of an ancient writer. As to the identity of the grammarian with the philosopher, Professor Max Muller says in a footnote of his *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* (P. 415):—"It is not much of an argument, but it may deserve to be mentioned, that the title given by Patanjali to the *Yoga Sūtras*, *Atha yogānusāsanam*, 'Now begins the teaching of the *Yoga*', and not *Atha yogajijñāsa*, reminds us of the title which the grammarian Patanjali gives to his *Mahābhāṣya*, *Atha Sabdānusāsanam*, 'Now begins the teaching of words or of the word'. This title does not belong to Panini's *Sūtras*, but to the *Mahābhāṣya*; and it is curious that such a compound as *Sabdānusāsanam* would really offend against one of Panini's rules. (II. 2. 14). It is true that this apparent irregularity might be removed by a reference to another rule (II. 3. 66), yet it is curious that the same, if only apparent, irregularity should occur both in the *Mahābhāṣya* and in the *Yoga Sūtras*, both being ascribed to Patanjali." As to the date of the

philosophical aphorisms in general and Patanjali's aphorisms in particular, the Professor says in another place of the same book:—"I think we must be satisfied with the broad fact that Buddha was later than the classical Upanishads, and that our philosophical *Sūtras* are later than Buddha, because they evidently refer to his doctrines, though not to his name.....In India we must learn to be satisfied with the little we know, not of the chronology of years, but of the chronology of thought; and taking the Yoga in its systematic form, that is, in Patanjali's *Sūtras*, as post-Buddhistic, we can best understand the prominence which it gives both to the exercise which are to help towards overcoming the distracting influence of the outer world and to the arguments in support of the existence of an Iswara or Divine Lord. This marked opposition became intelligible and necessary as directed against Kapila as well as against Buddha; and in reading the *Yoga Sūtras*, it is often difficult to say whether the author had his eye on the one or the other. If we took away these two characteristic features of the Yoga, the wish to establish the existence of an Isvara against all comers and to teach the means of restraining the affections and passions of the soul as a preparation for true knowledge, such as taught by the Sankhya Philosophy, little would seem to

remain that is peculiar to Patanjali. But though the *Sūtras* are post-Buddhistic, there can be no doubt that not only the general outlines of the Sankhya, but likewise all that belongs to the Karma Yoga or work Yoga was known before the rise of Buddhism. As to the Yoga practices or tortures, we know that after practising the most severe *tapas* for a time, Buddha himself declared against it, and rather moderated than encouraged the extravagant exercises of Bráhmānic ascetics. His own experience at the beginning of his career had convinced him of their uselessness, nay of their danger. But a moderately ascetic life, a kind of *via media*, remained throughout the ideal of Buddhism, and we can well understand that the Bráhmaṇas, in trying to hold their own against the Buddhists, should have tried to place before the people an even more perfect system of asceticism. And lest it should be supposed that the Sankhya Philosophy, which was considered as Orthodox or Vedic, had given its sanction to Buddha's denial of an *Ātman* and Brahman, which was far more serious than the denial of an Iswara, Lord, it would perhaps have seemed all the more necessary to protest decidedly against such denial and thus to satisfy the ingrained theistic tendencies of the people at large by showing that the Sankhya, by admitting Purusha, admitted a belief in something

transcendent, and did by no means, according to Patanjali at least, condemn a belief even in an Isvara or Lord. In that sense it might truly be said that the Yoga Philosophy would have been timely and opportune if it came more boldly forward after the rise of Buddhism, not so much as a new system of thought, but as a re-invigorated and determined assertion of ancient Sankhya doctrines which for a time had been thrown into the shade by the Buddhist apostacy. In this way it would become intelligible that Buddhism, though sprung from a soil saturated with Sankhya ideas, should have been anterior to that new and systematic development of Sankhya Philosophy which we know in the Sûtras of Kapila or in the Kárikás or even in the Tattvasamása; that in fact in its elements, the Sankhya should be as decidedly pre-Buddhistic as in its final systematic form it was post-Buddhistic."

Now, for uncritical minds the comparatively modern date thus assigned to Patanjali's *Sûtras* seems impossible on account of the fact that they are commented upon by a writer who is named Vyása, and who is supposed by these credulous people to be no other person than Veda Vyása, the reputed compiler of the Vedas and founder of the Vedanta Philosophy. If Veda Vyása has written a commentary on Patanjali's aphorisms,

the latter must be, it is naturally thought, at least a contemporary of the former. But if you remember the conclusions of my first lecture, you will see that it is impossible that a compiler of the Vedas, who must have lived over a thousand years before Christ, should have written a treatise the very language of which, not to speak of other more prominent characteristics, shows how far it is removed from the time of the compilation of the Vedas. The Vyāsa of the *Yoga Bhāṣya* must therefore be some other person of the same name, or the name of the supposed compiler of the Vedas and founder of the Vedānta Philosophy must have been attached to the book to increase its importance in the eyes of its readers.

Coming now to the characteristic features of Patanjali's system, those which distinguish it from Kapila's, you must have gathered them already from what I said of them in my last lecture and from the extracts from Max Muller I have just read to you. Patanjali's metaphysical views are the same as Kapila's. He accepts *in toto* the latter's Dualism of Prakṛiti and Puruṣa and his theory of the evolution of the objective world from the seeming contact of these two primary principles. The practical ideal is also the same with the two philosophers. It is *kaivalya* or isolation through a knowledge of Puruṣa's distinction from Prakṛiti

and her modifications. But while Kapila stops at knowledge, Patanjali develops a system of *sādhana* or practice for the attainment and perfection of knowledge. This practical system is the chief feature of Patanjali's system which distinguishes it from Kapila's. The other and rather minor distinguishing feature of the system is its so-called *Isvaravāda*, Theism, which has gained for it the name of *Sesvara Sāṅkhya*, the Theistic Sankhya, in contradistinction from *Nirīśvara* or the Atheistic Sankhya of Kapila. Now, I shall dispose of this theistic character of Patanjali's system before I speak of his system of *sādhana*. Patanjali's Theism, such as it is, does not constitute a fundamental difference between his system and Kapila's, and would hardly have been objected to by the latter. In fact Patanjali's Isvara or Ruler hardly deserves the name, having scarcely any ruling function. In no sense is he a Creator or even a Supporter of the Universe. Both Prakṛiti and Puruṣa are independent of him and can do without him. Neither the creation or evolution of the world, nor the happiness or liberation of ordinary souls depend upon him. Patanjali's world, both material and spiritual, as well as Kapila's, is complete without him. Our philosopher introduces his Isvara into his system almost incidentally. Speaking of the means by which the



attainment of *samādhi* or concentration may be hastened, he says, in the 23rd aphorism of his first chapter,

“ईश्वर प्रणिधानाद् वा’

“Or by devotion to Isvara.” The commentator explains this aphorism thus :—

“प्रणिधानात् भक्तिविशेषात् आवर्जित ईश्वरस्तमनगृह्णाति अभिधानमात्रेण, तदभिधानादपि योगिन आसन्नतमः समाधिलाभः फलञ्च भवतीति” ।

“When Isvara is adored by *pranidhāna*, a particular kind of devotion, he helps the *yogin* by wishing him success, and through the Divine goodwill the *yogi*’s attainment of *samādhi* and its fruits is hastened.” The same idea is repeated in the 45th aphorism of the second chapter, which runs thus :—

समाधिसिद्धिरीश्वरप्रणिधानात्

“*Samādhi* is attained by devotion to Isvara,” where, however, the commentator puts a slightly different interpretation on ईश्वरप्रणिधान, meaning by it the resigning of everything to Isvara. However, having introduced Isvara thus into his system, Patanjali attempts a definition of him in the next aphorism, the 24th of the 1st chapter. He says :

कृते शक्यमविपाकाशयैरपरामृष्टः पुरुषविशेष ईश्वरः ।

“Isvara is a particular Purusha who is untouched by imperfections, actions, their fruits and desires or impressions.” The *klesas* or impressions are, according to the third aphorism of the second chapter, ignorance, egotism, attachment, repulsion and fear. Then the 25th aphorism says :

“तत्र निरतिशयं सर्वज्ञबीजम्” ।

“In him the seed of omniscience (which is supposed to exist in every Purusha) exists in its perfection.” And the 26th aphorism adds :

पूर्वेषामपि गुरुः कालेनानवच्छेदात् ।

“He is the teacher even of the teachers of old, (meaning Brahmá and the rest), as he is not limited by time.” Now, our philosopher gives not a shred of proof for the existence of the God he thus defines, and his commentator simply appeals to the sastras as our authority for believing in such a God. But the sastras, if they are an independent authority at all, speak of a much truer and sublimer God, one who is the Creator and Support of the whole world of Prakriti and Purusha and the Inner Self of all beings, ‘सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा’. Of such a God, the only true God, Patanjali and his followers know nothing. Their God, if he is at all to be called so, is only an ideal Person who, though outside Prakriti and outside ordinary souls, is supposed to help the latter in an inscrutable way

in getting freed from their fancied connection with her,—a connection in which they have been involved somehow or other from eternity. The nature of this help may be gathered from the commentaries on the 25th and 29th aphorisms. In the former it is said that God incarnated himself as the great sage Kapila and taught the Sankhya philosophy to Asuri. In the latter it is stated how by uttering and meditating on the meaning of the syllable *Om*, which indicates Isvara, the obstacles to the attainment of liberation are removed and the true nature of the soul is revealed. I quote both the *sūtra* and the *bhāṣya*. The former runs thus :—

ततः प्रत्यक्चेतनाधिगमोऽप्यन्तरायाभावश्च ।

“From such utterance and meditation the true nature of the soul is realised and the obstacles to the attainment of liberation are removed.” The commentator says :

“ये तावदन्तराया व्याधिप्रमृतयः ते तावदीश्वरप्रविधानात् न भवन्ति, स्वरूपदर्शनमप्यस्य भवति । यथैश्वरः पुरुषः शुद्धः प्रसन्नः केवलः अनुपसर्गः । तथायमपि बुद्धेः पतिसंवेदीयः पुरुषः, इत्येवमधिगच्छति ।”

That is, “The obstacles, such as disease etc., are removed through devotion to Isvara, and the soul too sees its true nature. It knows that as the Purusha,

Isvara, is holy, blissful, isolated and free from all illusions, so is this Purusha, on whom *buddhi* is reflected." According to the Yoga Philosophy then, Isvara is our great exemplar. We are to be as he is. In no sense are we to be united to him or to realise him as our true Self, which is the goal of the Vedantist. This will be more clear when we have got an idea of Patanjali's system of *sādhana*, of which I now proceed to give a short account.

I shall not introduce you into Patanjali's elaborate system of distinctions and his formidable array of technical terms to signify them. If they were important, specially if they were reflected in the *Gītā* system of *Sādhana*, I should not indeed have spared myself the trouble of explaining them and my hearers that of trying to master them. But I do not consider them important, and the author of the *Gītā* completely ignores them. I shall therefore give you only the gist of the system, and this lies in the definition of *yoga* and the *yogāngas*, which latter mean accessories or helps to *yoga*. *Yoga* itself is thus defined in the second aphorism :

“योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः ।”

“*Yoga* is the restraining or stopping of the modifications of the mind.”

I translate *chitta* by ‘mind’, as there is no other word in English that I may put in its place. It

must be known, however, that *chitta* is composed of *manas*, *ahankāra* and *buddhi*, the sensorium, egoism, and intellect, the distinctive characteristics of which I explained in my last lecture. As the modifications of the mind,—our sensations, ideas, desires and volitions,—are all results of the action of Prakriti on the soul, they must be, by long and patient practice, restrained and got rid of, in order that it may be restored to its true nature,—isolation from Prakriti. When the mind's modifications are stopped, that state comes in sight and is, for the time, realised, as the second aphorism says :

तदाद्रष्टुः स्वरूपेज्जयानम् ।

“In that condition the seer, that is Purusha, realises his own true nature.” When in its usual condition, that is, under the influence of Prakriti, the soul identifies itself, by mistake of course, with the modifications of the mind,—thinks that they are its own modifications, as the fourth aphorism says :

“वृत्तिसारूप्यमितरत्र” ।

“In the other condition there is an identification of Purusha with the modifications of the mind.”

Now, the *yogāṅgas* or helps to *yoga* are eight in number. They are enumerated in the 29th aphorism of the second chapter, which says :

“यम-नियमासन-प्राणायाम-प्रत्याहार-धारणा-ध्यान-

समाधयोऽष्टावङ्गानि ।

“*Yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhāraṇā, dhyāna* and *samādhi* are the eight *yogāṅgas*.

*Yama* is defined in the next *sūtra* :

अहिंसा सत्यास्तेय ब्रह्मचर्यापरिग्रहा यमाः

“*Yama* consists in abstinence from enmity, truthfulness, abstinence from stealing, restraining of the sexual passion and, renunciation of the desire for gain.”

*Niyama* is defined in the 32nd *sūtra* of the same chapter :

शौचसन्तोषतपः स्वाध्यायेश्वरपूजिधानानि नियमाः ।

“*Niyama* consists in purity, contentment, endurance, study and devotion to Isvara.”

*Asana* or posture is defined in the 46th *sūtra* :

“स्थिरसुखमासनम् ।”

“*Asana* means remaining calm and at ease.” The commentator mentions various kinds of posture, which, however, I omit as useless.

*Prāṇāyāma* is defined in the 49th *sūtra* :

“श्वासपृश्वासयोगतिविच्छेदः प्राणायामः ।

*Prāṇāyāma* is stopping the course of the in-going and the out-going breath. This practice is said to help concentration. It consists of three varieties,

*rechaka*, that is stopping respiration after letting out the out-going breath ; *puraka*, that is stopping respiration after letting in the incoming breath ; and *kumbhaka*, that is simply stopping the breath without either of the above processes. The 51st *sūtra* recognises a fourth variety, but that is only an advanced stage of the practice.

The fifty-fourth aphorism defines *Pratyāhāra* :

“स्वविषयासम्प्रयोगे चित्तस्य स्वरूपानुकार इवेन्द्रियानां प्रत्याहारः ।”

“*Pratyāhāra* is the drawing away of the organs of sense from their respective objects and making them assume, as it were, the nature of the mind.”

Now, the five *sādhana*s already defined are only *Bahirangāni*, external helps. The remaining three, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*, about to be defined, are called *antarangāni*, the inner helps, and these again are themselves *Bahirangāni* to *nirvīja* or *asamprajñāta samādhi* to be explained later on. However, according to the first aphorism of the third chapter,

“देवदत्तचित्तस्य धारणा ।”

“*Dhāraṇā* is fixing the mind on a particular object, external or internal. And, according to the next *sūtra*,

“तत्र प्रत्ययैकतानता ध्यानम् ।”

“*Dhyāna* is the uninterrupted flow of the mind towards that object, that is, to have continually

in the mind a conception of that object, to the exclusion of other conceptions." And then, according to the third aphorism,

“तदेवार्थमात्रनिर्भासं स्वरूपमन्यमिव समाधिः ।”

“When *dhyāna* has become so deep, that it appears to be the object itself, and the meditating mind appears to have no independent nature of its own, it is called *samādhi*.” In other words, *samādhi* is the mind's absorption in the object,—its feeling of identity with it.

The fourth *sūtra* gives a name to the combination of the three processes just described,—

“व्यमेकत्र संयमः ।”

“When these three processes are directed to the same object, they together are called *samyama*.”

We have, then, in this chapter and in the fourth and last, the description of numerous powers—powers of knowing and doing that are said to be acquired by *samyama* directed to various objects, internal and external. These powers are such as to make their possessor practically omniscient and omnipotent. It would be beside our purpose even to name these powers; and to decide how far, if at all, they are obtainable, is simply beyond my capacity. It is not quite clear why such powers are discussed in a



treatise whose main object is to teach us the way to liberation. The object seems to be an exhaustive survey of the world of mental modifications created by Prakriti, so that the soul may know the totality of things, gross and subtle, that it has to abjure, and may also feel their worthlessness as compared with *kaivalya*. An utter indifference to all things included in this wide survey is inculcated in the system and this indifference is said to be the way to *kaivalya*. The various *samyama* enumerated and described are all parts or varieties of what is called *Samprajñāta Samādhi*, a *samādhi* in which all things are known. From this we are to pass to *Asamprajñāta Samādhi*, a *samādhi* in which nothing is known, in which the whole world of Prakriti's modifications disappears for ever and Purusha is left to his own true isolated nature, *kaivalya*, which is defined both negatively and positively in the last *sūtra* of the system. Negatively it is

“प्रवृत्तार्थभूषणानां गुणानां प्रतिप्रसवः ।

“The disappearance, in Prakriti, of the *gunas*, which have no more any use for Purusha”, and positively,

“स्वप्नप्रतिष्ठा वा चित्तिशक्तिरिति ।”

“Consciousness, *i.e.*, the soul, realising its own true nature.”

Coming now to the *Bhagavadgītā*, we find it taking no cognisance of the *vibhūtis* or powers which occupy such a prominent place in the Yoga Philosophy. To it the term *vibhūti* has a very different meaning. The *vibhūtis* named in the tenth chapter are particular manifestations of God,—manifestations towards which the worshipper's attitude should be one of reverence. They are objects not to be acquired, but to be admired and adored. That the *Gītā* idea of the Godhead is very different from Patanjali's, I need scarcely say after what I have said about it in my third and fourth lectures, and when so much has to be said of it in the lectures that are to follow. The God of the *Gītā* is not a particular Purusha beyond Prakriti and beyond the sphere of finite consciousness. He indeed transcends both Nature and the finite soul, but he is also, as we have already seen, immanent in them, being the sole Agent in Nature and the Inner Self of every person, *sarvabhūtāntarātmā*. We are not only to adore him and seek his help in attaining perfection, but also to realise him as our own true Self and the Self of the world. Perfect and final union with him is, according to the *Gītā*, our goal, our object, to which all *sādhanas* or religious exercises are to be directed. To the author of the *Gītā* as to Patanjali, *yoga* is the sole concern ; but while to the former, *yoga* means

union with God, to the latter *yoga* is rather disunion or separation,—separation from Prakriti and her effects. But beneath this difference—a difference which is real to a great extent,—there is also a deep unity between the *Gītā* and the Pátanjala conceptions of *yoga*,—a unity which explains the similarity, so far as it exists, of the *sādhana*s inculcated in the two systems. *Yoga* means not only union, but also steadying, steadiness, concentration, remaining in one's own true nature, and so on. All these meanings of the term are recognised in the *Gītā*, and in so far as it recognises these meanings, its conception of *yoga* agrees with that of the Yoga Philosophy. According to both, the soul has an inner, essential nature which it should be the object of every aspirant after final liberation to realise. To Patanjali, it is the inner nature of the individual soul, and nothing more ; to the author of the *Gītā* it is *brahmabhāva*, the essential nature of God himself. To Patanjali, the way of *vyatireka*, antithesis or abstraction,—the soul's abstraction from Prakriti,—is the sole way to the realisation of *yoga* ; to the author of the *Gītā*, it is only the initial or first way, the other, the one to be adopted in the second place, is the way of *anvaya* or synthesis, of re-union with Prakriti itself. To Patanjali, there is no return from the soul's isolation, for what is outside is entirely

alien to the true nature of Purusha ; to the author of the *Gītā*, a return is necessary when once the true nature of the soul has been realised, and the return is far from being opposed to *yoga*, for what seems alien and external to the aspirant who has not obtained the fullest enlightenment, is found to be in perfect harmony with the soul to the fully enlightened *yogin*. So we see how much similar, and yet how much dissimilar too, is the *Gītā* system of *yoga* to Patanjali's system of the same name. I need hardly say that the main element of the dissimilarity consists in the much greater assimilation of Upanishadic ideals and practices on the part of the *Gītā* than on that of the followers of the Yoga Philosophy. However, the points of identity and difference between the two systems will be made clearer by a few quotations from and references to the *Gītā*, which I now proceed to make.

The first mention of *yoga* in the *Bhagavadgītā* occurs in the thirty-ninth verse of the second chapter, where Krishna, having shewn Arjuna the distinction between the body and the soul, and taught him the 'eternality and immortality of the latter, turns his attention from this theoretical knowledge to the philosophy of practice. These two aspects of his system Krishna calls *Sāṅkhya* and *Yoga* respectively. As I have already said,

these names are very ancient and have come down from a time when the Sankhya and Yoga philosophies did not exist as sectarian doctrines. We find Yama teaching this unsectarian *Sāṅkhya* and *Yoga* to Nachiketá in the *Kathopanishad*,—I mean *Sāṅkhya* and *Yoga* in the sense of the distinction of subject and object and the means of concentrating the mind on the real Self of all. The very term *yoga* occurs in the last chapter. In verses tenth and eleventh of this chapter, the practice is thus described :

यदा पञ्चावतिष्ठन्ते ज्ञानानि मनसा सह ।  
 बुद्धिश्च न विचेष्टते तामाहः परमां गतिम् ॥  
 तां योगमिति मन्यन्ते स्थिरामिन्द्रियधारणाम् ।  
 अप्रमत्तस्तदा भवति योगो हि प्रभवाप्ययौ ॥

That is,—“When the five senses, with the sensorium, are at rest, and the understanding also does not work,—that is called the highest condition by the wise. They call that unmoved state of the senses *yoga*. The worshipper then becomes watchful, for *yoga* is subject to rise and fall.”

In the *Svetāsvatara Upanishad*, as I have already said, *yoga* takes a more systematic form. In the second chapter and elsewhere, there is much anticipation of Patanjali. Even the name of Kapila, the reputed founder of the Sankhya Philosophy, occurs in the second verse of the fourth

chapter. He is mentioned not as the founder of a school, but as the first-born, and is evidently, as Sankara says,<sup>1</sup> meant for Hiranyagarbha, the world-soul, the first embodied being. It would not perhaps be too much to guess that if Kapila, the supposed founder of the Sankhya system, was a real person, he was named after this Kapila, Kana-kavarana or Hiranyagarbha, or that the system, whoever may have been its founder, was named after this first-born, the Logos of Hindu Philosophy. However, in the thirteenth verse of his sixth chapter, Svetásvatara speaks of the Supreme Being as “सांख्ययोगाधिगम्यम्”—knowable by *sāṅkhya* and *yoga*, that is, as Sankara explains, by metaphysical discussion वस्तुतत्त्वविचारणम्, and concentration of mind, चित्तसमाधानरूपसाधनम्. Here also, therefore, we do not find any trace of the rise of any philosophical sects under the names of ‘Sankhya’ and ‘Yoga’. It is in the same unsectarian sense that the author of the *Gītā* speaks of *sāṅkhya* and *yoga* in the passage I have referred to, to which I return after this digression, which, I hope, has not been quite useless. He says :

एषा तेऽभिहिता सांख्ये बुद्धिर् योगितिमां शृणु ।

बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पाथं कर्मवन्धं प्रहासयसि ॥

“This, which has been taught to thee, is wisdom concerning *Sāṅkhya*. Now listen to wisdom

concerning *Yoga*, possessing which thou shalt cast off the bonds of *karma*."

*Sāṅkhya* and *yoga* are explained by Sankara in the same way here as in the commentary on the *Svetāsvatara Upanishad*. To the author of the *Gītā*, *yoga*, though essentially the same thing everywhere, has two different but allied aspects,—the devotional and the practical. In the former aspect, it is the realisation of oneness with Brahman in the act of meditation ; in the latter, it is acting as God acts,—in the same self-possessed, disinterested way as he does. To the author of the *Gītā*, as well as to Patanjali, God is our great exemplar. He calls God *Yogin* and *Yogesvara*. But while Patanjali's God is inactive, having nothing to do with Nature, the God of the *Gītā* is ever-active, ever directing the course of Nature and finite souls. However, it is in the latter, that is the practical aspect, that our author gives the two formal definitions of *yoga* that we meet with in his book, the devotional aspect being dwelt on in other passages to be noticed later on. In the forty-eighth verse of the second chapter, *yoga* is defined as evenness or equanimity—the quality of not being moved by success or failure in action. Krishna says to Arjuna,

योगस्यः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।

सिद्ध्यासिद्धीः समो भूता समतः योग उच्यते ॥

"Do thy duties, O Dhananjaya, from the standpoint of *yoga*, casting off attachment and being the same in success and failure. *Yoga* means evenness or equanimity."

Again, the fiftieth verse of the same chapter gives another definition or rather description of *yoga*. It says,

“योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ।”

“*Yoga* is skill in actions”—skill, that is, the wise tact by which actions are done and at the same time their binding power avoided.

In verse three of the third chapter, Krishna says to Arjuna,—

श्रोत्रेऽक्षिन् द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मया नम ।

ज्ञानयोगेन सांख्यानं कर्मयोगेन योगीनाम् ॥

“O sinless one, of yore I spoke of two paths in the world—that of the Sankhyas through the *yoga* consisting in knowledge, and that of the *yogins* through the *yoga* of action.” The meaning of *sāṅkhya* and *yoga* as two paths or methods of spiritual culture, paths followed by bodies of devotees not always in harmony with each other, but between whom there should not be any conflict according to the *Gītā*, is made quite clear. In explaining “पुरा प्रोक्ता नम”—“said by me before or of yore,” Sankara says that the Lord said this in the Vedas, by which term we may here



understand the Upanishads, the *jñānakāṇḍa* of the Vedas. In the *Gītā* itself the teaching in question does not occur in any previous passage. That the followers of *sāṅkhya* and *yoga* were not always in harmony, though in fact there is no conflict between the two systems of *sādhana*, appears from verses 4 and 5 of the fifth chapter, in which it is said :

सांख्ययोगौ पृथग्वालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः ।

एकमथास्थितः स प्रगुभयोर्विन्दते फलम् ॥

यत् सांख्यं प्राप्यते स्थानं तदयोगैरपि गम्यते ।

एकं सांख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥

“Fools and not wise men consider *sāṅkhya* and *yoga* to be different. He who follows one path earnestly, enjoys the fruit of both. The place or goal that is reached by the Sankhyas, is reached by the Yogins also. He alone sees rightly who looks upon *sāṅkhya* and *yoga* as one.” The idea seems to be that a Sankhya, if he is consistent and in earnest, must also be a Yogin and *vice versa*. As to the *yogāṅgas*, the *Gītā* is not indeed as systematic as the *Yoga Sūtrās*, but all these *sādhana*s are recognised and insistently inculcated in various parts of the book. The virtues and exercises included under *yama* and *niyama* are impressively taught in the third, fourth and fifth chapters, and in a more general way in the

fourteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth. The author\* does not seem to attach much importance to *prāṇāyāma*, but he speaks of it here and there as an exercise adopted by certain devotees, and seems even to inculcate it in one or two passages. In speaking of various kinds of *yajnas* or religious practices in the fourth chapter, he says in verse 29,

अपाने जुहति प्राणं प्राणेष्वपानं तथापरे ।

प्राणापानगतीं कुरु प्राणायामपरायणः ॥

i.e., "Others who practise *prāṇāyāma*, offer the outgoing breath into the incoming breath, and the incoming breath into the outgoing breath, and restrain the course of both."\* Here *pūraka*, *rechaka* and *kumbhaka* are all referred to, though not mentioned by name.

In verses 27 and 28 of the fifth chapter, the author seems to inculcate *prāṇāyāma* or a practice similar to it. He says,

सर्वाङ्गं कृता बहिर्वाह्यांश्चक्षुषैवाग्नये भुवोः ।

प्राणापानौ समौ कृता नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ ॥

यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिर्मुनिर्मोक्षपरायणः ।

विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः ॥

i.e., "Shutting out all external contacts, and fixing the eyes between the eye-brows, equalising the outgoing and the incoming breath, which pass

through the nostrils, controlling the senses, *manas* and intellect, the sage who, seeking liberation, remains always free from desire, fear and anger, has already attained liberation."

Now, the rest of the *yogāṅgas*,—*āsana*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*,—are all particularly dealt with in the sixth chapter,—a chapter in which the *Yoga* and the *Gītā* systems most closely meet. But *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi* are, in the *Gītā*, all directed to God, and not to any finite objects, external or internal. As to *āsana*, the seat and the posture, the author's directions, put into the mouth of Krishna as the Supreme Being, are—

युचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।

नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चक्रेजिनकुशोत्तरम् ॥

तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः ।

उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद् योगमात्मविषुदये ॥

सर्वं कायमिरो जीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरम् ।

संप्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिग्भानवलोकयन् ॥

प्रश्नान्तात्मा विमतभीर्ज्ञप्त्वाचरित्रते स्थितः ।

बभूव संयम्य मच्चित्तो मुक्त आसीत् तत्परः ॥ ११-१४

"Having, in a clean spot, placed an immovable seat, neither too high nor too low, with *kusa* grass, a piece of deer skin and a piece of silk cloth placed one on the other in order, making the mind

calm there, with its movements and those of the senses restrained, let the *yogin* practise *yoga* for the purification of his mind. Holding erect and still the trunk, the head and the neck,—firm, and keeping the eyes fixed on the end of the nose, (perhaps the upper end, the meeting of the eyebrows, is meant) and not allowing the eyes to wander on all sides, calm-minded, free from fear, firm in the vow of the ascetic life, restraining his mind, thinking on me and devoted to me, let him attain the *yoga* condition."

As if to guard against the mistake of taking *brahma-chārvrata*, the vow of the ascetic life, in an extreme sense, the author says :

नात्यश्नतसु योगोऽस्ति न चैकान्तमनश्नतः ।

न चाति स्वप्नशीलस्य जग्रद्यतो नैव चात्कुलम् ॥

युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।

युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥ 16, 17

"*Yoga* is not possible for him who eats too much, nor for him who eats too little; not for him who sleeps too much, nor for him who is too wakeful. The *yoga* that puts an end to suffering is attained by him 'alone whose food and rest are moderate, and who is moderately active, moderately sleepy and moderately wakeful.

Now, *pratyāhāra* is taught in the following verses:—

सङ्कल्प प्रभवान् कामांस्तुक्ता सर्वानशेषतः ।

मनसैवेन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः ॥

शनेः शनैरुपरमेद बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया ।

आत्मसंग्रहस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥

यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम्

ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥ 24-26.

यदा विनियतं चित्तमात्मन्येवावतिष्ठति ।

निःस्पृहः सर्वकामेभ्यो युक्त इत्युच्यते तदा ॥

यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते क्षीपमा स्मृता ।

योगिनो यतश्चित्तस्य युञ्जतो योगमात्मनः ॥ 28, 29.

“Giving up all desires born of attachment, drawing away the senses with the mind from all sides, with the intellect firmly held, the *yogin* should gradually withdraw from all objects, and fixing the mind on the self, should not think of anything whatever. From all objects among which the restless mind wanders, he should draw it away and fix it on the self. When the restrained mind is fixed on the self alone, and the devotee ceases to long for any objects of desire, he is said to have attained *yoga*. As a lamp in a windless spot does not flicker—this is said to be the similitude or model of a *yogin* of restrained mind practising *ātmayoga*, communion with the self.”

I draw your attention particularly to the words

“आत्मसंख्यं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत्”—“fixing the mind on the self, one should not think of anything whatever.” It should be seen that *yoga* is not meditation, with which it is often confused, and that far less is it adoration or prayer, and least of all, ordinary thinking, be it on the sublimest subjects. It is realising—seeing—the Self, the infinite Self which is the Self of each one of us and the Self of the universe. A whole system of philosophy lies at the back of this practice,—a system which must be mastered at all costs before there can be any success in *yoga*. It is because we do not care to master it, and seek to achieve success in less laborious ways, that there is so little real spirituality amongst us, that *dhyāna* has become a mere name, that adoration is so shallow and dry, and that prayer lacks fervency. However, as you see from the extract just given, our author, in speaking of *pratyāhara*, has already touched upon *dhāraṇa*, just that fixing of the mind on the Self which we have been discussing. Our success in *dhyāna* is nil, because we do not care to—do not know how to—take hold of the real Self,—the Infinite Self in us. When once we have laid our hold on him, our next course—*dhyāna*, is simple. It is only keeping our hold on and on amidst distracting circumstances, the allurements of other thoughts, however holy and sweet they may seem.

As Patanjali has told us, *dhyāna* is प्रत्यवेकतामता—the identity of conceptions. *Brahma-dhyāna* or *ātmadhyāna* means that throughout the process there should be only one conception before the mind, the conception of the Self. A very pregnant hint for avoiding distraction in *dhyāna* is given in a little tract named *Aparokṣānubhūti*, ascribed to Sankarāchārya. It is that if the thought of anything else (though really there cannot be anything beyond Brahman), comes to the mind in the course of *dhyāna*, Brāhman, should be seen in it, or in other words, it should be identified in essence with Brahman. However, as we have seen in Patanjali, so here in the *Gītā* too, *dhyāna* deepens into *samādhi*, the absorption of the mind in the Self, the conscious identity of the thinking and the thought, a state of intense joy and perfect holiness. I shall let the *Gītā* itself speak. It says :

यत्रोपरमते चित्तं निश्चलं योगसेवया ।

यत्र चैवात्मनात्मानं पश्यन्नात्मनि तुष्यति ॥

सुखमात्मनिकं यत्तद् बुद्धिर्नाश्रयतीन्द्रियम् ।

वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितमवति तत्ततः ॥

यं कञ्चा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।

यस्मिन् स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचल्यते ॥

हं विद्याद् दुःखसंयोगविद्योमं योगसंश्रितम् ।

स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्विण्णचेतसा ॥ २०-२३

युञ्जते वं सदाज्ञानं योगी नियतमानसः ।

आमिन् निर्वाणपरमां नत्संस्थामधिगच्छति ॥ 15

प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम् ।

उपैति आनन्दरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकलमषम् ॥

युञ्जते वं सदाज्ञानं योगी विगतकलमषः ।

सुखीन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ॥ 27, 28

"That condition in which the mind, restrained by the practice of *yoga*, becomes quiescent, in which the *yogin*, seeing the Self by the inner sense, rejoices in the Self, in which he enjoys that intense joy which transcends the outer senses and is felt by the inner sense alone, and in which, when once established, one never loses the Supreme Truth, than which, when once gained, no other gain seems greater, and in which when one is established, one is not moved even by a great misfortune—know that condition to be *yoga*, a condition free from the touch of suffering. One should try to attain it with a heart firm and free from depression. Thus practising *ātma-yoga*, with his mind controlled, the *yogin* obtains the nirvanic peace of abiding in me. Verily supreme bliss comes to this *yogin*, whose mind is calm, whose passions are controlled, who has become one with Brahman and who is



sinless. Thus ever practising *ātmayoga*, the yogin, freed from sin, obtains with ease the intense joy of touching Brahman."

The practical results of this transcendent discipline, one which ordinary people know and understand so little, and the real nature of which words fail adequately to express, are thus described :

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।  
 ईक्षते योगीशुक्लात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥  
 यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं स मयि पश्यति ।  
 तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥  
 सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमाश्रितः ।  
 सर्वथा वर्त्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्त्तते ॥  
 आत्मोपस्थे न सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽब्जं न ।  
 सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ २९-३२

That is,—“One whose mind is steadied by *yoga*, one who sees the same thing everywhere, sees the Self in everything and everything in the Self. To him who sees me in everything and everything in me, I am never out of sight, nor is he ever out of my sight (that is without my grace). The *yogin* who, established in unity, worships me as existing in all things, abides in me, whatever may be his occupation. He who looks upon the

pleasure and pain of all beings as his own, is the highest *yogin*."

These results, however, are conditional upon the vision of the Visvarupa,—God in the form of the whole universe, a *sādhana* which the author of the *Gītā* describes in his eleventh chapter. In teaching that *sādhana* he is under the influence, not of the *Yoga*, but of the Vedānta Philosophy. We shall therefore take up that subject in our next lecture in which, God willing, I shall speak of the relation of the *Gītā* with the religion and philosophy of the Vedānta.

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## LECTURE VI

### The *Bhagavadgita* and the Vedanta Philosophy

You have already heard that the relation between the Vedanta and the *Bhagavadgita* is so close, that the latter is called one of the three *prasthānas*, institutes, of the Vedanta doctrine. It is called the *Smṛiti Prasthāna*, the *Upanishads* and the *Brahma Sūtras* being named respectively the *Sruti* and the *Nyāya Prasthāna*. You also know how the *Upanishads* are compared to cows and the *Gītā* to milk in the oft-quoted verse,

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दनः ।

पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भीक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं सहत् ॥

“The *Upanishads* are cows, the cowherd’s son, that is, Krishna, is the milker, Prithā’s son, that is Arjuna, is the calf, the wiseman is the drinker, and the nectarlike *Gītā* is the excellent milk.” But you have also seen that the philosophy of the *Gītā* is deeply influenced by the Sankhya system and its system of *sādhana* by the *yoga* doctrine, and that its attempted reconciliation of Sankhya and

Vedanta is far from successful. So that, though we have undoubtedly a Vedantic system of philosophy in the *Gītā*, it will be seen, as we proceed, that its Vedantism is a distinct variety, distinct not only from the current schools of Vedantic thought, but even from the original system set forth in the *Brahma Sūtras*. But these divergences are all on more or less minor points, and within the latitudes allowed to the various systems which come under the comprehensive name 'Vedanta'. All these systems profess to derive their doctrines from the *Upanishads*, which constitute the Vedanta in the original sense, the *Vedanta Srutis*, and from the *Brahma Sūtras*, the 'Vedanta' in the secondary sense, the *Vedanta Darshana* or the Philosophy of the *Upanishads*. In Bengal, people are apt to understand by the term 'Vedanta', not the *Upanishads*, as they ought to understand, but the *Brahma Sūtras*, otherwise called the *Vedanta Sūtras*. No harm would be done by this if people could always remember that 'the Vedanta' thus understood is only a short and elliptical name for "the Vedanta Philosophy," and that the treatise thus named is not an independent authority, but appeals at every step to the *Upanishads*, of which it is only an exposition. In this respect, the Vedanta Philosophy, as well as the *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā*, presents a striking contrast to the four other

principal systems of Indian philosophy. While the main appeal of the latter is to Reason, that of the former is to scripture, the Vedas, of which the Upanishads constitute the *jñānakāṇḍa* and are accepted by the Vedānta Philosophy as its basis. This feature of the philosophy is apt to repel, and has perhaps repelled, many an inquirer from its study. In philosophy, as in science, one expects analysis and synthesis, ratiocination and introspection, and not a blind appeal to authority. I must confess that this positive and dogmatic appeal to *śabda*, word or scripture, as an independent source of knowledge, seems to me a very unphilosophical procedure on the part of the Vedānta philosophers. In making this appeal they act more like preachers or theologians than philosophers. Tradition, old and hoary tradition, naturally commands respect, the respect not merely of the simple and the ignorant, but of the cultured and the thoughtful also; and I think that Brāhmas and other rationalists are not making the best of it in propagating their views. But the religious use of tradition, whether it be the hoary tradition of the Vedas or the recent tradition of theistic leaders like the Raja, the Maharshi or the Brahmananda, is a legitimate instrument in the hands of the religious preacher only. It is out of place in the promulgation of a system of philosophy. However,

as our Vedantists use the instrument uniformly and consistently, and yet claim to be philosophers, we should, instead of being repelled by their constant appeal to *śabda-pramāṇa*, dive somewhat deep into their teachings, and see what they really mean by it. And when we do this, when specially we study the source of knowledge to which they refer us, namely the *Upanishads*, we find, contrary to our suspicions, that these authorities, far from claiming any miraculous or abnormal inspiration, argue a good deal and profess<sup>4</sup> to derive the most valuable part of their knowledge from direct experience, an experience open to all pure, thoughtful and well-balanced minds. That the inspiration claimed by the *rishis* of the *Upanishads* is a normal inspiration, such as every person, duly qualified, may have, is clearly admitted by the Vedantic philosophers, themselves. The *Vedānta Sūtra* III. 2. 24 says

“अपि संराधने प्रत्यक्षानुमानाभ्याम्”

“It is known from the *śrutis* and *smritis* that the *yogins* perceive Brahman in the act of adoration.” At the end of his commentary on the tenth *anuvāk* of the “Sikshā Valli” of the *Taittirīya Upanishad*, Sankara says :

“एवं श्रौतस्मार्तेषु नित्येषु कर्मसु युक्तस्य निष्कामस्य परं ब्रह्म-  
विशिष्टोरासीति दर्शनानि प्रादुर्भवन्त्यात्मादिविषयानीति ।”

"Thus is it shewn that the visions of the *rishis* concerning the soul and such other matters, manifest themselves to one who is devoted to the constant duties prescribed by the *srutis* and the *smritis*, who is unselfish and who seeks to know the Supreme Brahman." We see, therefore, that the Vedantic appeal to the *Upanishads* is an appeal to an external authority to be blindly received only for those who are incompetent for meditation and introspection. To such persons the *srutis* may serve, like Goldsmith's village preacher, to

"Allure to brighter worlds and lead the way."

But to the pure-hearted, the thoughtful, those who are used to fixing their minds on the self, the appeal is to प्रत्यक्षम्, direct perception, the word used for the *sruti* in the aphorism I have just quoted. Seen in this light, the Vedanta philosophy is divested of its apparently dogmatic guise, and becomes, with the teachings to which it appeals, a record of devout meditations and spiritual experiences to be verified by the personal experiences of its students and to be accepted or rejected accordingly as it agrees or disagrees with them.

Now, there are two principal varieties of Vedantic doctrine, those represented by the names of Sankara and Ramanuja. That represented by

Madhva I leave out of account as only the verdict of common sense in the name of philosophy. Sankara and Rámánuja both follow two ancient traditions. The latter professedly follows the interpretation of an ancient Vedantist, Bodháyaṇa, whose commentary is now lost, but which he is said to have seen in Kashmir. That the doctrine represented by Rámánuja existed in Sankara's time, that is, about four hundred years before Rámánuja, is evident from Sankara's statement and refutation of it in his commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras*. That Sankara's views did not originate with him, is evident too from their anticipations in Gaurapáda's *Kārikā* on the *Māndūkya Upanishad*, on which Sankarāchārya has left an elaborate commentary. Sankara's Māyāvāda is traced by the Vaishnavas to Buddhistic influence. But whence did the Buddhists derive their own Māyāvāda? All systems of Indian thought, the Buddhistic included, owe their origin more or less to the *Upanishads*. The Buddhist doctrines of illusion and *nirvāṇa* are clearly traceable to certain tendencies in the speculations of the Upanishadic sages, specially of the sage Yājñavalkya. Both Māyāvāda and Parināmavāda therefore, the theories identified with the names of Sankara and Rámánuja, are very ancient theories, and in that sense orthodox. In fact both are defended by quotations from and



references to the *Upanishads* and the *Brahma Sūtras*. How far the interpretations of these authorities given by the one school or the other, are correct, must be judged by each reader for himself. In the brief statement of Vedantic doctrines I am going to give here, I shall, following, so far as possible, the method adopted in my last two lectures,—those on the Sāṅkhya and Pātanjala systems,—draw upon the *Brahma Sūtras* rather than the *Upanishads* as my authority, I say ‘so far as possible,’ for as you have already seen, there is this clear difference between the aphorisms of the other systems and those of the Vedānta, that whereas the former are, in the main, their own authority, the latter refer, almost at every step, to the *Upanishads* as their final authority and are in fact unintelligible without their study. However, before I proceed with my statement, it seems necessary that I should set forth the main points at issue between the two principal schools of Vedāntism, so that you may judge for yourselves, so far as this is possible in such a hurried and superficial view of the matter, how far the doctrines of the *Brahma Sūtras* are to be filiated to the one or the other of the two schools. Both the schools, to begin with, profess the *Advaita* or monistic doctrine, namely that Brahman is the sole Reality, *Ekam eva advitīyam*, in the words of the *Upanishads*,—one

without a second. Both deny *viśāṭhya veda*, a difference of kind, between mind and matter, God and Nature. Nature is not anything apart from God, say both the schools. Both again, deny *svaśāṭhya veda*, difference in the same kind, between the Divine and the human intelligence. Both the systems say, man, as a spirit, is not distinct or apart from God, but is in, or in essential relation to, him. But they differ as to *svagata veda*, internal difference. Brahman, according to Sankara, has no internal difference; he is a pure unity without difference, *ekarasam*. But according to Rāmānuja, Brahman has internal difference, matter and finite minds being particular *prakāras* or modes of his existence,—not apart, but distinguishable, from his absolute nature. Hence Sankara's *Advaita* or Monism is called *Visuddha* or *Nirviśeṣa*, unqualified, and Rāmānujā's *Viśiṣṭa*, qualified. The theories of creation held by the two schools follow directly from the nature of their Monism. In what sense is Brahman the cause of the universe? In what way does he create and sustain it? Both the schools indeed hold God to be *nimitta* as well *upādāna kāraṇa*, the efficient as well as the material cause of the universe. None of them can possibly entertain the notion of a universe, either of matter or mind, distinct or apart from him. But they differ widely as to their

notions about the exact relation of creation to the Creator, and as to the way the former is derived from the latter. Holding Brahman to be the sole Reality, and pure Unity without internal difference, Sankara cannot possibly recognise the material world and finite minds as realities; they are to him only appearances, things having no *pāramārthika* or real, but only *vyāvahārika* or seeming, existence. There never was any real creation ; therefore, what appears to be so is an illusion, — *jīva*, the subject of illusion, forming a part of the whole phenomenon. It has indeed a cause, and the cause is no other than Brahman. But it is not the absolute nature of Brahman as pure intelligence, which does not admit of agency or causality, but a mysterious power in him which we must postulate, but which cannot be pronounced either as one with or distinct from him, for as the sole Reality, nothing can be distinct from him. And it cannot either be one with him, for it is an agent, a cause, and is therefore changing, whereas he is above all change. This inscrutable power Sankara calls *Māyā* or *Avidyā*. Like its effects, it is only *vyāvahārika* and not *pāramārthika*, and Brahman as *Isvara*, Creator, is only apparent and not real. You thus see how dangerously near Sankara is to the denial of a Creator,—to Sankhya and Buddhistic *Nirīśvaravāda*, Atheism. In fact he avoids it only by

being inconsistent with himself, by rejecting the logical consequence of his philosophy. However, on the other hand, Rámánuja, as he allows matter and finite minds distinct places in Brahman, believes in a real creation,—not in the origination of things apart from God, which is the popular idea of creation,—but in the change of matter and finite minds from the germinal (*avyakta*) condition in which they exist in *pralaya*, the state of relative dissolution, to a manifested (*vyakta*) condition. This change he calls *parināma* or *vikāra*. It is a real, not an apparent change,—a change not of the absolute nature of God, but of his creative power. To Rámánuja, therefore, the distinctions of *vyāvahārika* and *pāramārthika* existence, of a *Saguna* and a *Nirguna* Brahman, of a creative and a non-creative Brahman, do not exist. To him Brahman is a real Isvara, the real Creator and Sustainer of a real world, and holding real relations with really finite souls.

The doctrines of *moksha* or liberation held by the two schools, also follow directly from their views on creation and its relation to the Creator. As the world of time and space, and of finite souls is to Sankara only appearance, and a pure, undifferented Intelligence the only Reality, so to him our ignorance of this truth, with its inevitable consequences of sin and sorrow, is our bondage,

and liberation consists in the attainment of, and establishment in, the knowledge of the real truth. But as there never was any real creation, any real world or any really finite soul, bondage and liberation are themselves only apparent. What is real in liberation is the eternal and absolute nature of Brahman, but as this nature is eternally manifest to Brahman himself, its manifestation to a finite intelligence is only apparent and belongs to the world of *Máyá*. What really takes place in liberation is that the false self and the false world, the effects of *avidyā*, are merged in the Absolute, which, as the true self and the true world, alone remains. On the other hand, the world and finite souls having a real though dependent place in Brahman, according to Rámánuja, liberation, to him, is, not our merging in God, but the finite soul's realisation of its true relation, and that of the world, to the Infinite. While, to Sankara, the finite, as such, has no existence, either real or apparent, after liberation, according to Rámánuja, the finite soul, freed from its bonds of ignorance and sin, continues to live an endless life in God, in a society of liberated souls, not returning to a 'mundane existence like souls in bondage, and not engulfed in the state of final though relative *pralaya* in which Nature and minds return for a time at the end of each cycle. Having now got some idea of the two

chief varieties of Vedantic doctrine, let us next see what support the one or the other finds in the *Sūtras* ascribed to Bādarāyana.

In his second aphorism Bādarāyana defines Brāhmān as

“जन्माद्यस्य यतः”

“He to whom the world owes its origin, support and dissolution.” Here, where he might have spoken of it if he held the doctrine, he tells us nothing about that mysterious power to which, and not to Brahman in his true nature, belong the origin, support and dissolution of the world according to the Māyāvādin.

In his seventeenth aphorism, Bādarāyana anticipates what he says more fully later on, namely that there is a difference between the universal and the individual self. In teaching that the *Anandamaya* spoken of in the second *valli* of the *Taittirīya Upanishad*, is Brahman and that the individual self cannot be meant by the ‘Anandamaya,’ he adduces as an argument, that in the passage that speaks of the ‘Anandamaya,’ the universal and the individual self are mentioned as distinct from each other.

“भेदव्यपदेशाच्च”

“For they are spoken of as distinct from each other.” The *Taittirīya* passage referred to is,

“रसो वै सः, रसं ह्येवायं लब्ध्वा नन्दी भवति”

—“Verily he is joy. For it is by gaining this joy that this, that is the individual, becomes happy.”

Man and God are here clearly distinguished as the gainer and the gained.

In five *sūtras* at the end of the first chapter, the author speaks of Brahman as the material as well as the efficient cause of the universe. The first of these, the 23rd aphorism of the fourth páda, says :

“प्रकृतिश्च प्रतिज्ञादृष्टान्तानुपरोधात्”

On this Sankara comments :

प्रकृतिश्च उपादानकारणञ्च ब्रह्माभूपगन्तव्यं निमित्तकारणञ्च न केवलं निमित्तकारणमेव । कस्मात् ? प्रतिज्ञादृष्टान्तानुपरोधात् । एवं हि प्रतिज्ञादृष्टान्तौ श्रौतौ नोपरोध्येते । प्रतिज्ञा तावत्, “उत तमादेशमप्राप्नोति येनाश्रुतं श्रुतं भवति, अमृतं मृतम्, अविज्ञातं विज्ञातम् इति ।” तच्च चैकेन विज्ञातेन सर्वमन्यदविज्ञातमपि विज्ञातं भवतीति प्रतीयते । तच्चोपादानकारण-विज्ञाने सर्वविज्ञानं सम्भवति उपादानकारणव्यतिरेकात् कार्यग्रस्य, निमित्तकारणादव्यतिरेकस्य कार्यग्रस्य नास्ति, लोके तच्छः प्राप्तादव्यतिरेकदर्शनात् । दृष्टान्तोऽपि, “यथा सोम्यैकेन मृत्पिण्डेन सर्वं मृगमयं विज्ञातं [स्याद्वाचारम्भणं विकारो नामधेयं मृत्तिकेत्येव सत्यम् ।” इत्युपादान-कारणगोचर एवास्मायते । तथा, एकेन लौहमणिना सर्वं लौहमयं विज्ञातं स्यात्, एकेन नखकृन्तनेन सर्वं कार्पास्यसं विज्ञातं स्यादिति च ।”

I give Professor Thibaut's translation : "Brahman is to be acknowledged as the material cause as well as the operative cause ; because this latter view does not conflict with the promissory statements and the illustrative instances. The promissory statement chiefly meant is the following one : 'Have you ever asked for that instruction by which that which is not heard becomes heard ; that which is not perceived, perceived ; that which is not known, known ?' (*Chhândogya Upanishad*, VI. 1 & 3 ). This passage intimates that through the cognition of one thing everything else, even if ( previously ) unknown, becomes known. Now, the knowledge of everything is possible through the cognition of the material cause. On the other hand, effects are not non-different from their operative causes ; for we know from ordinary experience that the carpenter, for instance, is different from the house he has built. The illustrative example referred to is the one mentioned (*Chhân. Up.* VI. 1.4), 'My dear, as by one clod of clay all that is made of clay is known, the modification (i.e., the effect) being a name merely which has its origin in speech, while the truth is that it is clay merely'; which passage again has reference to the material cause."

The next *sūtra* is :

“अभिधोपदेशाच्च”



“अभिधा” means *सृष्टिसंकल्प*, the wish to create. The meaning of the whole aphorism is that it is also clear from the scriptural statement of Brahman's wish to create, that he is the material as well as the efficient cause of creation. The references are to *Taittiriya*, II. 6 and *Chhândogya*. VI 4.3, the passages being सोऽकामयत बहु स्यां प्रजायेय—“He wished ‘May I be many, may I grow forth,’ and “तदेक्षत बहु स्यां प्रजायेय” “He thought, “May I be many, may I grow forth.” These texts show that in creating the world, the Creator multiplied himself, that is, manifested himself in the form of the objects created. He is therefore their material as well as their efficient cause.

The next *sûtra* bears a similar import. Omitting it, I give the fourth, which is striking as mentioning the very word which gives name to Rāmānuja's view of creation, *parināmanavāda*. It says :

आत्मकृतेः परिणामात्

On this Sankara comments :

इतश्च प्रकृतिवत्त्वं, यत्कारणं वत्तप्रक्रियायां ‘तदात्मानं स्वयमकुर्वत’ इत्यात्मनः कर्तृत्वं, ‘स्वयम् अकुरुत’ इति कर्तृत्वम् । कथं पुनः पूर्वसिद्धस्य सतः कर्तृत्वेन व्यवस्थितस्य क्रियमाणत्वं शक्यं सम्पादयितुम् ? ‘परिणामात्’ इति ब्रूयः । पूर्वसिद्धोऽपि हि सद्भावा विशेषेण विकारात्माना परिणामयामासात्मानम् इति ।”

Professor Thibaut translates : “Brahman is the

material cause for that reason also that scripture, in the passage 'That itself made its self ( *Taittiriya Upanishad*, II. 7.) represents the self as the object of action as well as the agent. But how can the self, which as agent was in full existence previously to the action, be made out to be at the same time that which is effected by the action?—Owing to modification, we reply. The self, although in full existence previously to the action, modifies itself into something special, viz. the self of the effect."

The fifth aphorism of the series, "योनिश्च हि गौयते"—"For he is spoken of as the source," turns upon the use of the term योनि, source, which in ordinary language refers to a material cause. The references are to the *Mundaka* texts, "कर्तारमीशं पुरुषं ब्रह्मयोनिम्" and "यद् भूतयोनिं परिपश्यन्ति धीरः ।" (III. 1.3 & I. 1.6.)

Now, these *sūtras* seem to leave no doubt that Bādarāyana's theory of creation is *Parināmavāda* and not *Māyāvāda*. This is confirmed by the 14th aphorism of the first pāda of the second chapter, in which the texts referred to are the same as those in the first of the series I have already quoted. This *sūtra* says :

"तदनन्यत्वमारम्भणशब्दादिभ्यः ।

The commentary says :

"कार्यमाकाशादिकं बहुप्रपञ्चं जगत्, कारणं परं ब्रह्म । तस्मात्

कारणात् परमार्थतोऽनन्यत्वं, व्यतिरेकेणभावः कार्यग्राह्यावगम्यते ।  
 कुतः ? आरम्भणशब्दादिभ्यः । आरम्भण शब्दस्यावदेकविज्ञानेन  
 सर्वविज्ञानं प्रतिज्ञाय दृष्टान्तापेक्षायामुच्यते, 'यथा सोमैकेन मृत्-  
 पिण्डेन विज्ञातेन सर्वं मृत्सम्यं विज्ञातं स्याद् वाच्यारम्भणं विकार  
 नामधेयं मृत्तिकेत्येव सत्यम् इति ।'

That is, "The effect is this manifold world consisting of ether and so on; the cause is the highest Brahman. Of the effect it is understood that in reality it is non-different from the cause, i. e. has no existence apart from the cause. How so? On account of the scriptural word 'origin' and the rest. The word 'origin' is used in connection with a simile, in a passage undertaking to show how through the knowledge of one thing everything is known, namely, "As, my dear, by one clod of clay all that is made of clay is known, the modification (i. e. the effect, the thing made of clay) being a name merely which has its origin in speech, while the truth is that it is clay merely."

Coming, now, to the relation between the universal and the individual self, we find that though teaching their fundamental unity, the author insists upon the acceptance of their relative difference, as we have already seen in considering the *sūtra*, "भेदव्यपदेशाच्च ।" This difference is more clearly put in the aphorism, "अधिकन्तु भेदमिर्ह्येषात्," which is the 22nd of the 1st pāda of the second chapter. It means that

Brahman is greater than the individual, for his difference from it is pointed out in several scriptural passages. Still more clear *sūtras* on the point are the 43rd and 50th of the third *páda* of the same chapter. The former calls the individual a part, *aṃśa*, and the latter, a reflection, *ābhāsa*, of the Universal. That this relative difference is everlasting, seems also to be Bādarāyana's teaching, as we shall see later on, when we consider his aphorisms on liberation. What we must discuss now is his view of the relation between the *saguna* and *nirguna* aspects of the Divine nature,—that nature as manifested or immanent in the various objects of the universe and that which transcends the limitations inherent in them. He discusses the subject somewhat fully in the second *páda* of his third chapter. The state of dreamless sleep gives him an idea of a consciousness transcending the differences and limitations incidental to waking life and he speaks of this undifferented unity of consciousness as the essential nature of Brahman. The differences and limitations appearing in Nature and in the individual consciousness he compares to the forms which the one undivided light assumes as it is manifested through different objects, and to the various and changing reflections of the sun in water. But as, in the case of Brahman, there is really no different object through

which he manifests himself, he admits that these comparisons are not quite apt. They are apt only so far, according to him, as to show that the essential nature of Brahman does not admit of change, as the real nature of light or the sun remains unchanged by the forms assumed by the former and the changing reflections of the latter. But the question arises, 'Are not the changes in Nature and the individual consciousness real, and if they are, of what reality are they the changes?' We have seen Sankara's answer to this question. It does not appear, from a consideration of the *sūtras* referred to, that their author also answers it in the same way. There is nothing, in all that he says, to indicate that he considers these changes as only apparent, and as the work of a mysterious power which can be pronounced as neither one with Brahman nor different from him, "तत्त्वान्यत्वाभ्याम् अनिर्वचनीया," in Sankara's words. On the contrary, as we have already seen, he pronounces the relation of the created world to the Creator as "तदनन्यत्वम्" non-difference from, or identity with, him. It seems clear then, that Bādarāyana believes in a really changing aspect of the Divine nature and in a sort of internal difference, स्वगत भेद, in it, such as makes it possible for Brahman to manifest himself in the form of various objects and under the limitations

of individual life. He is indeed far from explicitly postulating such an aspect, but it is clearly implied in what he says of Brahman in his relation to Nature and the finite mind. He, almost as much as Sankara, seems puzzled with the apparently contradictory utterances of the Upanishads about the Divine nature, utterances which once identify it with finite and changing objects and intelligences and again distinguish it from them, and he in his own way, not in Sankara's, belittles the finite and changing aspect of Reality. Though not teaching Sankara's doctrine of illusion, he is as far as the great Mâyávádin from an insight into any dialectic method which sees that the finite and the infinite, change and eternity, immanence and transcendence, are not really contradictory ideas, but are harmonised in a higher synthesis. Of such a method, as it finds expression in Hegel and in British philosophers influenced by his philosophy, I shall try to give an idea, God willing, in my next lecture, in which I shall speak of the teachings of the *Bhagavadgītā* on *jñāna*, knowledge. We shall also see, as we proceed, that the author of the *Gītā*, and I may add, Achārya Rāmānuja, had a faint idea of such a method. However, coming to the doctrine of liberation, we find that it is rather difficult to ascertain what the *Sūtra* teaching is on the subject. I

have discussed the subject at some length in my *Hindu Theism* and my lectures on *The Vedānta and its Relation to Modern Thought*, and I shall take it up in a future lecture of the present series. Here I have time simply to say, that while in some of his *sūtras*, Bādarāyana seems to teach that in the state of liberation, the individual will be entirely merged in the universal, in others he seems to teach the opposite doctrine, namely that the difference between the finite and the infinite is everlasting. Instances of the former class of *sūtras* are the 13th and 16th of the second *pāda* of the fourth chapter, while the whole of the fourth *pāda* of the same chapter, specially *sūtras* 17 and 21, are instances of the latter class. As this last *pāda* is specially devoted to the exposition of the doctrine of liberation, its *sūtras* seem to indicate the author's serious opinion on the matter. Sankara takes this section as an exposition of *आपेक्षिकी मुक्ति*, relative liberation, and not of *परामुक्ति*, absolute liberation. But as the author of the *sūtras* himself does not make this distinction, devotes no other section to the latter kind of liberation, and closes his book with the exposition of the former kind, Sankara's opponents make out a strong case against him when they say that the distinction is his, and that the author of the *sūtras* has no idea of another kind of liberation than the

one expounded by him in this section. I must confess that it sometimes seems to me that Bádaráyana did not quite make up his mind in the matter on account of the fact that the *rishis* of the *Upanishads* themselves seem to be divided in opinion on the subject. How very different, for instance, are the teachings of Yájnavalkya in the *Brihadāranyaka*, *Maitreyi Brāhmaṇa*, and those of the *Kaushītaki Upanishad* in its first chapter! The latter doctrine comes very near the teachings of Brāhma leaders and authors on heaven and immortality. But I may as well mention here that our idea of endless progress we seek for in vain in either the Vedānta or the *Bhagavadgītā*.

Coming now to the *Gītā*, we find that inspite of its Sankhya proclivities, which, as we have seen, it tries to harmonise with views apparently opposed to them, it teaches on the whole an impressive form of Vedantism. The unity of God with Nature and the individual self, the central truth of Vedantism, is briefly but clearly expressed in the 20th verse of the tenth chapter. Addressing Arjuna as Gudákēsa, one who has overcome sleep, the Lord says:

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताश्चक्षितः ।

अहमादिश्च मध्याच्च भूतानामन्त एव च ॥

“I am the Self seated in the heart of all beings. I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all things.”



In verses 4 and 5 of the seventh chapter, which I have quoted more than once in these lectures, this identity finds a more detailed expression. They are important as calling the objective world the lower and the subjective the higher *prakriti*, nature, of God, and as showing, that the author had at least a vague apprehension of the true dialectic of thought,—of the fact that the subject both makes and overlaps the distinction of subject and object and that its unity in difference is the true ultimate reality. The verses are :—

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।

अहंकार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥

अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मेऽपराम् ।

जीवभूतां महाबाहो यथेदं धारयते जगत् ॥

“Earth, water, fire, air, ether, the sensorium, the understanding and egoism,—this is my *prakriti* divided eightfold. This is the lower. Learn that I have a higher *prakriti*, that which appears in the form of the individual soul, and by which this changeful world is supported.”

To the *Gītā*, then, God is both the efficient and the material cause of the world, even what is called the material world being a part or aspect of his nature. As it is beautifully said in two other verses,

अयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सत्रे भविष्यता इव ।

“All this is woven in me, as gems in a string (VII.7)” and विष्टम्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् “I stand supporting all this by a part of myself.” (X. 42.)

The world does not exhaust God,—he transcends it. This thought the author tries to express in utterances which seem to contradict one another. The struggle is seen most clearly in the ninth chapter, from which I extract a few verses. The Lord is represented as saying :

मयां ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।  
 मत्स्थानि सर्वं भूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥  
 न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ।  
 भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः ॥  
 यथाकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रगो महान् ।  
 तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीतुप्रपधारय ॥  
 सर्वं भूतानि कौन्तेय प्रकृतिं यान्ति मामिकाम् ।  
 कल्पक्षये पुनस्तानि कल्पादौ विस्तृजाम्यहम् ॥  
 प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टभ्य विस्तृजामि पुनः पुनः ।  
 भूतग्रामामिमं कृत्स्नमवशं प्रकृतेर्वशात् ॥  
 न च मां तानि कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय ।  
 उदासीनवदासीनमसक्तं तेषु कर्मासु ॥ 4-9

“By me, whose form is unmanifested, is all this world pervaded. All things exist in me, but I do not exist in them. And they do not exist in me. Behold my mysterious power, I support all things,

but do not exist in them ; my self is the support of things. As the mighty wind moving everywhere rests ever in space, so know all things as resting in me. All things, O son of Kunti, enter my Prakriti at the end of a cycle, and I create them at the beginning of the next cycle. By means of my Prakriti I again and again create this multitude of things, which are all dependent and under Prakriti's control. But these acts, O Dhananjaya, do not bind me, who remain as one unconcerned, and unattached to those acts."

Now, notwithstanding such unsatisfactory and apparently contradictory expressions, inevitable in all attempts at philosophising without a clearly conceived logical method, there is not a single word in the whole *Gītā* which lends any countenance to the theory of illusion, which tells us that things are only appearances, and the creative power of God is a false notion which disappears as soon as real knowledge is acquired. The word *Māyā* is indeed used here and there, but not in the sense in which the typical *Māyāvādin* uses it. The existence of error is frankly recognised, and also the power which produces it. But that a beginningless and at the same time really non-existent *avidyā* is the cause of all things in time and space and of the finite intelligence, is an idea which seems never to have entered the mind of our

author, however ingeniously commentators biassed by their own theories may try to enlist his support to them. The sense in which he uses the word 'Máyá' is clear from the following verses of the seventh chapter :

ये चैव सात्त्विका भावा राजसास्तामसाश्च ये ।

मत्त एवेति तान् विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि ॥

त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वं मिदं जगत् ।

मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम् ॥

देवौद्देशा गुणमयी मम माया दुरतराया ।

मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥ 12-14

"And whatever things are formed of *sattvam*, *rajas* or *tamas*, know them as proceeding from me. But I am not in them, they are in me. Verily this divine Máya of mine is hard to surmount. But he who devotes himself to me, is freed from it."

As we have already seen, the *Gītā* recognises both the immanent and transcendent, the *saguna* and *nirguna*, aspects of God. But unlike some of the *Upanishads* and unlike the *Brahma Sūtras*, it puts great emphasis on the former and insists upon its proper realisation. This teaching is found specially in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth chapters, taking in the eleventh the most impressive form. In the tenth we are taught to fix our mind on particular objects and persons displaying power, grandeur or beauty in extraordinary degrees, as

manifestations of God. This is the form of meditation called *Pratika Upāsana* in the *Upanishads*. The mind being thus prepared for a higher flight, it is taught to look upon the whole world as the manifestation of God. Krishna showing Arjuna the whole world in him is only a poetic form of a great spiritual fact—a profound spiritual experience—the vision of all things in God and God in all things. The eleventh chapter of the *Gītā* is a most glorious chapter in the whole record of the world's spiritual experience. I do not think it has an equal anywhere else. It has faint anticipations in the *Upanishads* and many an imitation in the Puranas, but none of them seem to approach it in the purity of its conception and the beauty and grandeur of its language. However, going on to the twelfth chapter, we find the author insisting that the *saguna upāsana* taught in the eleventh chapter is a better way to union with God than the worship of the *nirgunam*. And the reason is not only that the concentration of the mind on the *nirgunam* is a more difficult task, but that *bhakti*, the reverential love of God, which, according to the *Gītā*, is not only the means, but of the very essence of union with God, is more easily attainable by the *saguna* worshipper than the devotees of the other class. *Bhakti* is taught specially in the twelfth chapter and more or less everywhere in the *Gītā*.

This *bhakti* teaching forms one of the chief features that distinguish the *Gītā* from all other Vedantic works. The word *bhakti* is nowhere to be found in the *Brahma Sūtras*, and it is to be found only in one of the principal *Upanishads*, the *Svetāsvatara*, perhaps the latest of them. Devotion, however, and even tender love, to the Supreme Self is taught in some of the principal *Upanishads*, specially the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*. But the author of the *Bhagavadgītā* had a clearer insight and a firmer grasp of man's difference from God and God's unceasing care of man than the composers of the *Upanishads*, and this element of faith—a clear perception of man's relation to God as of a person to a Person, of a finite person to an Infinite Person,—is an essential condition of the cultivation of *bhakti*. However, of *bhakti* we shall have enough to say in some of our future lectures. As to the point specially engaging our attention now, the difference of the finite self from the Infinite, the author of the *Gītā* teaches it most clearly when, in his fifteenth chapter, he speaks of the individual self as a part of the universal. He makes the Lord say:

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।

मनः स्रष्टानोन्नियाचि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ॥

“A part of myself, the eternal individual self, draws round itself, in the world of living beings,

the five senses and the sixth, the sensorium, which rest in Prakriti."

That the difference between the individual and the Universal Self is everlasting, persisting even in the state of final liberation, is indeed nowhere taught in the *Gītā* in so many words. But that this is the doctrine held by the author, may be gathered from the whole trend of his teachings. Before we have occasion for a detailed discussion of the subject, we must be satisfied with the following facts standing out prominently in the book. Krishna, the incarnation of the Supreme, is represented as speaking to his worshipper, Arjuna, with a full sense of the differences that constitute the world, including the difference between the worshipper and the Worshipped. If the Supreme Being were, to the author of the *Gītā*, a mere undifferentenced unity of consciousness, and the human soul, a mere passing appearance of it, the very composition of the book would have been impossible. And then, *bhakti*, reverential love of God, which depends on a consciousness of difference between *Bhagavat*, the Adorable, and *bhakta*, the adorer, is taught, as I have already pointed out, as a constituent element in the highest form of union with God, wherever this is taught in the book, for instance in the twelfth and eighteenth chapters. Incidentally, I may

mention that the plural number is used in the following verse of the 4th chapter with reference to souls which have attained final union with God, and this would not have been done if the author thought that they were merged, without marks of recognition, in the Supreme Essence. The Supreme Being is made to say:

वोतरागभयक्रोधा मन्मथा मामुपाश्रिताः ।

बह्वो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः ॥

“Free from passion, fear and anger, absorbed in me, taking refuge in me, and purified by the fire of wisdom, many have attained my state.”

However, I shall close with a recitation of the following verses of the fifteenth chapter, which speak briefly of the final state of liberation. It seems that words like these could not be uttered by one who looked for being hopelessly engulfed in an infinite but impalpable essence. Having spoken of the banian tree of the world, the world of selfish desires, the author says :

अश्वत्थमेनं सु विरुद्धमूलम्

असङ्गश्छेप दृढं च क्लृप्ता ॥

ततः पदं तत् परिमार्गितव्यं

यस्मिन् गता न निवर्त्तन्ति भूयः ॥

तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपदेत्

यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रवृत्ता पराव्ययी ॥



निर्भीनमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा

अध्यात्मनित्या विनिष्ठसकामाः ।

दन्द्र्विमुक्ताः सुखदुःखसञ्ज्ञै-

र्गच्छन्तमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत् ॥

न तद् भासयते सूर्यो न शशाको न पाचकः ।

यत् गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥

That is, "Having cut asunder this firm-rooted *asvatha* with the strong sword of dispassion, then is that goal to be sought for whither, having gone, none return again,—to be sought for with the words, 'I seek refuge in the primeval Person from whom streamed this ancient current.' Free from pride and delusion, with the evil of attachment conquered, ever living in the spirit, their desires completely turned away, liberated from the pairs of opposites known as pleasure and pain, the wise reach that eternal goal. That the sun illumines not, nor the moon nor fire,—that blessed abode of mine to which, having gone, none return."

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## LECTURE VII

### The *Gita* Ideal of Knowledge compared with the Western Ideal

With the present lecture we enter into the *Gītā* system of *sādhana* or spiritual culture. The *Gītā* is pre-eminently a treatise on *sādhana*, the philosophy contained in it being only the ground-work of its edifice of practical religion. That such a ground-work is necessary, and that *sādhana* cannot properly be based on mere uncritical belief, is not indeed clear to all. Many, even in these rationalistic times, think with the Bengal Vaishnavas, that '*Viśvāse pāyī Krishna, tarke bahudur*, "God can be had through faith, he is hard to find by reason." The author of the *Gītā* seems to think very differently. He has indeed a room in his system for people who cannot obtain any direct knowledge of God and things divine. He does not shut the gates of heaven against such people. But he thinks that they should at least have a second-hand knowledge, a knowledge derived from others, of the conclusions arrived at by the wise. Having spoken of direct knowledge in his thirteenth chapter, he adds

अन्ये त्वेवमजानन्तः श्रुत्वानिमग्न उपासते ।

तेऽपि चातितरन्तेऽव मृत्युं श्रुतिपरायणाः ॥ २५

“But others, who do not know thus, worship me by hearing of me from others. They too overcome death—those who are thus devoted to the *Sruti*”.

But the highest wisdom, wisdom in the real sense, cannot be second-hand. It must be direct and must come through a good deal of searching, of mental analysis and synthesis, deduction and induction, observation and introspection,—processes of which ordinary people are very afraid. They seem to think that there is a royal road to religious knowledge, a road open alike to the wise and the ignorant, the thoughtful and the thoughtless. In the *Bráhma Samáj*, this belief has been fostered and perpetuated by the doctrine of Common Sense or Intuition taught by the Maharshi and the *Brahmánanda*. The current belief seems to be this : The knowledge of God and matters spiritual is instinctive and direct ; reasoning or philosophical study is not necessary for the attainment of this knowledge, whereas direct or instinctive knowledge is the thing that availeth in spiritual life. Now, it is impossible to imagine a confusion of thought more hopeless than what is involved in this sort of thinking, and yet it is just this that our leading men, without distinction of sections and denominations, men belonging alike to the

Adi, New Dispensation and Sádtháran sections of the Bráhma Samáj, foster and encourage by their precepts and examples, by direct teaching and by their practical indifference to the philosophical study of religion. There would be some consistency in all this if such men believed and taught people to believe, as the author of the *Gita* evidently does, in a body of sacred lore to be blindly received and followed. But for men who have turned their backs, so far as possible, against all traditional beliefs, there is not a jot of consistency in crying down and discouraging the systematic pursuit of philosophical knowledge. That there is a large body of truths which is beyond observation and reasoning, beyond them because making them possible by its forming their basis, admits, to me, of no doubt. But these are just the truths that are the most difficult to discover, to know as truths,—most difficult, because they lie, not on the surface, but in the back ground of our rational existence. It is only by a long and laborious process of mental analysis and synthesis that they can be discovered. Current religious beliefs, common to the thoughtless and the thoughtful, are *not* intuitive beliefs. They are not only inextricably mixed up with errors and superstitions, but are open to all the fluctuations of doubt. Intuitive truths, on the other hand, in as much as they are *necessary*, can

never be doubted or disbelieved. The fact, therefore, that there are intuitive principles at the basis of our rational life, is no justification for neglecting or encouraging people to neglect the study of religious philosophy. It cannot either afford any ground for believing, or teaching people to believe, that so far as practical religion is concerned—the religion of devout worship and of the faithful performance of duty—it is all the same whether one acquires or does not acquire a philosophical knowledge of religion. The difference between a critical and first-hand knowledge of religious truths and an uncritical and blind acceptance of them, can not be exaggerated, and the difference must affect in various ways the practical pursuit of religion. In fact, notwithstanding the patronising attitude of our author towards those who

श्रुत्वान्ये भ्य उपासते

“worship God by hearing of him from others,” I more than doubt if the higher forms of worship are possible to those who have no direct knowledge of the deeper truths of religion. Such truths, for instance, as that the human self is essentially one with the Divine self, and that the self as such is beyond the limitations of time, space, quantity and quality,—truths like these, I say, are incapable of mere blind acceptance. In order to be accepted, they must be understood, and to understand them

is beyond the power of those who, however pure-hearted they may be, and however accustomed to mere emotional exercises, have not passed through a systematic course of metaphysical thinking—thinking concerning the relations of nature, man and God. I therefore think that the hope held out by the author of the *Gītā*, “that they too, those who are devoted to the *Sruti*, overcome death,” should not mislead us. There are indeed various kinds of death, and some kind or kinds, for instance, that of indifference to religious culture and subjection to lower desires, are indeed capable of being overcome by devotion to the *Sruti*. According to the *Isopanishad*, even the pursuit of the Vedic Karmakānda, which it calls *avidyā*, not-knowledge, secures immunity from such death ; but real immortality, *amritam*, it says, is attained only by *vidyā*, knowledge. I refer to the verse

विद्याञ्चाविद्याञ्च यस्तद्वे दोभयं सह ।

अविद्याया मृत्युर्गतौर्त्वा विद्यायामृतमश्नुते ॥

“He who knows knowledge and not-knowledge at the same time, overcomes death through not-knowledge, and attains immortality through knowledge.” The death which, according to the *Gītā*, the possessor of second-hand knowledge overcomes, may very well be some such

condition as the Upanishad quoted refers to. However, as to the higher kind of knowledge, the direct knowledge of God and things divine, the author of the *Gita* is never tired of praising it. I shall extract only one of many passages in the book which extol it. It is from the fourth chapter and runs thus :

अथान् द्रव्यमयाद् यज्ञाज् ज्ञानयज्ञः परस्तप ।  
 सर्व्वं कर्म्मोखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥  
 तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्ने न सेवया ।  
 उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्तुदर्शिनः ॥  
 यज् ज्ञात्वा न पुनर्मोहमेव यास्यसि पाण्डव ।  
 येन भूतान्यग्निषेण द्रक्ष्यस्यात्मन्यथो मयि ॥  
 अपि चेदसि पापेभ्यः सर्व्वेभ्यः पापकृत्तमः ।  
 सर्व्वं ज्ञानप्रवेनैव वृजिर्न संतरिष्यसि ॥  
 यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात् कुरुतेऽर्जुन ।  
 ज्ञानाग्निः सर्व्वकर्म्माणि भस्मसात् कुरुते तथा ॥  
 न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।  
 तत्स्वयं योगसंसिद्धः कालेनात्मनि विन्दति ॥  
 अज्ञावान् लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः ।  
 ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥  
 अज्ञश्चाश्वधानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति ।  
 नायं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः ॥  
 योगसंन्यस्तकर्म्माणं ज्ञानसंच्छिन्नसंशयम् ।  
 आत्मवन् न कर्म्माणि निवधन्ति धनञ्जय ॥

तस्मादज्ञानसम्भूतं हृत्स्थं ज्ञानासिमात्मनः ।

द्वितीयं स ग्राह्यं योगमाप्तिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भारत ॥33-42.

That is,

“Superior is wisdom as a sacrifice to the sacrifice with objects, O harasser of foes. All action, O son of Prithá, finds its completion in wisdom. Learn this by humbling yourself to the wise, by inquiring of them and serving them. They who have seen the truth will teach thee. Knowing which thou wilt not again be thus deluded, O son of Pándu, and by which thou wilt see all things in thyself and then in me. Even if thou shouldst be the most sinful of all sinners, thou wilt surely cross the whole ocean of sin by the bark of wisdom. As a fire fed with fuel reduces wood to ashes, so does the fire of wisdom reduce all actions to ashes— (that is, destroys their binding power.) Verily there is nothing in the world as holy as wisdom. One perfected by *yoga* finds it in himself in due course. He obtains wisdom who is reverent, devoted to the pursuit of wisdom and has his senses under control. Having attained wisdom, he ere long attains to the supreme peace. A man without wisdom and reverence and given to doubt is ruined. For a doubting soul, there is neither this world nor the other nor happiness. O Dhananjaya, actions do not bind him who has



renounced actions by *yoga*, whose doubts are removed by wisdom and who is self-possessed. Arise, therefore, O Bhárata, cut asunder with the sword of wisdom the doubt that lies in thy mind and establish thyself in *yoga*."

I shall follow up this praise of *jñāna* by another extract which tells us of the real or highest object of *jñāna*, that is the Absolute, Parabrahman. I take it from the thirteenth chapter.

ज्ञेयं यत्तत्प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वाऽमृतमश्नुते ।  
 अनादिमत् परं ब्रह्म न सत्तद्वासदुच्यते ॥  
 सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत् सर्वतोऽक्षिगिरीमुखम् ।  
 सर्वतः श्रुतिमहोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥  
 सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम् ।  
 असक्तं सर्वभृच्चैव निर्गुणं गुणभोक्तृ च ॥  
 बहिरन्तश्च भूतानामचरं चरमेव च ।  
 सृष्टमत्वात्तदविज्ञेयं दूरस्थं चान्तिके च तत् ॥  
 अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम् ।  
 भूतभर्तुं च तज्ज्ञेयं यस्यिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ॥  
 ज्योतिषामपि तज्ज्योति स्तमसः परमुच्यते ।  
 ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं ज्ञानगन्धं हृदि सर्वेऽस्त्रं विष्ठितम् ॥ १२-१७ ।

That is,

"I shall now tell you of the object of knowledge, knowing which one attains immortality. It is Para Brahma, who is without beginning and who

cannot be called either being or non-being. (That is, of whom definite qualities can neither be affirmed nor denied). Everywhere are his hands and feet, everywhere his eyes, head and mouth, everywhere his ears; he pervades all. He manifests the powers of all the senses, but is himself without senses. He is unattached and yet he supports all; he is without the *gunas*, but he perceives them. He is both without and within all things and is both moving and unmoving. He is incomprehensible because of his subtlety, and is both far and near. He exists undivided in all things and yet seems divided. He is to be known as the supporter, absorber and creator of things. He is the light of all lights and is said to be beyond darkness. He is knowledge, the object of knowledge and the goal of knowledge, and is seated in the heart of all beings."

Now, no one could have given this characterisation of the Absolute unless he possessed the highest wisdom—a true knowledge of the Supreme Reality. The idea of the Absolute as both immanent and transcendent, as manifesting itself in innumerable finite forms and yet transcending them and maintaining its infinitude, is here most clearly grasped. To those who deal with mere ideas, ideas imbibed from the intellectual atmosphere around them, and have no first-hand know-

ledge of the Supreme Reality, such as is revealed in moments of true inspiration, this description of it will no doubt appear full of contradictions and therefore incorrect; but really it is these apparent contradictions which to me prove that the writer of this description was a true seer. As to the place of contradiction in a true system of Divine Philosophy, I shall speak later on. One point may really strike the thoughtful reader of this extract, namely that it speaks only of the metaphysical attributes of God and is silent about his moral perfections. It seems that when penning this description, the writer was in a metaphysical mood. But here and there in his book he shows himself equally awake to the ethical relations of God and man. To him God is not simply the truth or essence of nature and man, but also his lover, friend and saviour. We have already seen that he is fully alive to man's difference from God and calls him God's *amsa*, part. But a mere consciousness of difference would not constitute a moral relationship. That man is the object of God's constant care, that he is leading him on through successive stages to final union with him, is clearly recognised by the writer, and it is this recognition which forms the charm of his book as a manual of practical religion. In his 9th chapter God is made to say:

पिताहमस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः ।  
 वेद्यं पवित्रमोङ्कारश्चैतत्समं यजुरेव च ॥  
 गतिर्भक्तां प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं कृच्छत् ।  
 प्रभवः प्रलयस्थानं निधनं बीजमवग्रहम् ॥ १७, १८ ।

“I am the Father of this world, the Mother, the Provider and Grandsire. I am the knowable, the holy, the syllable *Om*, and also *Rik*, *Sāman* and *Yajus*. I am the Goal, the Sustainer, the Lord, the Witness, the Abode, the Shelter and the Friend. I am the Origin, Dissolution and Stay. I am the Support and the Seed imperishable.” Later on in the same chapter God says :

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।  
 तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ २२ ॥

“To those who worship me and meditate on me and no one else, and who are constantly devoted, I give new gifts and preserve what is acquired by them.” In the twelfth chapter he says :

ये तु सर्व्वाणि कर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्पराः ।  
 अनन्ये नैव योतेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥  
 तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।  
 भवामि न चिरात् पार्थ मयावेक्षितचेतसाम् ॥  
 मयेव मम आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।  
 निवसिष्यसि मयेव भूत उर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥ ६-८ ।

"But those who worship me, renouncing all actions in me, and regarding me as supreme, and meditating on me with undivided devotion,—them, O son of Pritha, those whose thoughts are thus fixed on me, I deliver, ere long, from the ocean of death". In the concluding chapter, Krishna says to Arjuna :

सर्वं गुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु मे परमं वचः ।

इद्योऽसि मे हृदमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ॥

मनूना भव मदभक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।

मामेवैष्यसि सदा ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥ ६४, ६५ ।

"Hear thou again my word supreme, the most secret of all. Surely thou art my friend, and so I tell thee what is good. Fix thy thoughts on me, be devoted to me, worship me, and bow down to me. I truly promise to thee that thou wilt find me, for thou art dear to me." '*Priyo'si me*'—"thou art dear to me"—these simple but solemn words ascribed to the Supreme Being by the author of the *Gītā* indicate his clear consciousness of man's personal relation to God, the divine interest in man, the world as purposive and a moral order. This idea may be very different from the ordinary Māyāvādi conception of the world, but that this is the world-idea of the *Bhagavadgītā*, the highest wisdom according to it, admits of no doubt, and ought not to be lost sight of by any student or exponent of the book.

Now, having seen what the *Gītā* conception of *jñāna*, knowledge of God, is, let us next see if the *Gītā* lays down any method of arriving at this knowledge. Now, here, in this matter of method, not only the *Gītā*, but all our ancient treatises on Theology and Philosophy, as a rule, seem to fail. They either do not lay down any method at all, or if they do, it fails to satisfy the modern intellect. I have no hesitation in saying this of the *Bhagavadgītā*, the *Upanishads*, the *Brahma Sūtras*, the *Sāṅkhya* and *Yoga Sūtras* and the principal commentaries on these, as well as numerous minor books on the Vedānta system which I have gone through, including the elaborate *Panchadasi*. I have often expressed my conviction that the system contained in the Vedāntic institutes is, in all essentials, a true system. But I confess that it is not their reasonings, or any that is to be found in other works subsidiary to them, that have convinced me of the substantial truth of the system. If I had not studied western systems, with their clearly laid down methods, and seen in their light the truth of the fundamental teachings of the Vedānta, I doubt if anything I have read of our native philosophy should have given me that conviction. Our books contain many a pregnant hint, hints which show that those who throw these hints have a reasoned system behind their unsystematic.

and unsatisfactory utterances. But to make out what their reasonings are, does not seem to be in the power of the common understanding. In fact even what I have called pregnant hints in their writings could hardly have appeared to be so to me if I had not passed through the course of tuition in western philosophy which I have referred to. However, to enter more closely into the question of method. The method of western philosophy since Kant has been what is called the Critical, as opposed to what are called the Dogmatic and the Sceptical. The Dogmatic method starts, in its attempt to solve philosophical problems, from pre-suppositions derived from common sense,—pre-suppositions which it has not yet begun seriously to doubt. It interrogates Nature directly, without thinking of its relation to mind, and without a clear grasp of the principles that underlie and regulate knowledge. Scepticism points to the fact that the conclusions arrived at by the dogmatic method conflict with one another and have no finality in them. The momentary triumph of a doctrine seems to depend on the superior ingenuity of its advocate, and may any moment be upset by a reasoner still more ingenious. It therefore lands in a despair of knowledge. But the sceptical proposition "No knowledge is possible", is itself a form of knowledge and thus condemns itself. The

Critical Method starts from knowledge as a fact, and in the whole range of its progress keeps within the limits of knowledge, for the absolutely unknowable, it sees, cannot in any proper sense come within the province of philosophy. It analyses knowledge, finds out its contents, its constitutive and regulative principles, and lays bare their mutual relations. It is primarily a theory of knowledge, and if it builds any theory of being, it bases it on the former. I miss such a method in our native philosophy. Discussions on the principles of reasoning are not indeed wanting in it. Our Nyáya philosophers are indeed remarkably subtle in such discussions. But such discussions do not go into the root of the matter. They give rise to what is called Formal Logic and to the discovery, to a certain extent, of the principles of Induction. But they all proceed upon a tacit acceptance of conceptions whose real nature, and the history of whose formation, have never been inquired into. In short, we have, in our native philosophy, a good deal of what are called Deductive and Inductive Logic, but little or nothing of what is called Real, Constructive or Transcendental Logic, such as the westerners have in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and Hegel's *Logic*, or in more modern treatises like those of Bradley and Bosanquet. However, the Critical Method, when consistently followed, leads



inevitably to Idealism, whatever particular form it may assume according to minor variations of method. Vedantism is a form of Idealism, the Vedantic thinkers, ancient and medieval, all being unanimous on the point that Nature and all finite intelligences rest on one Supreme Intelligence, which is the real and ultimate Reality. This would make one expect to meet with expositions at every turn, in Vedantic treatises, of the relativity of subject and object, mind and matter, such as students of European philosophy find in Berkeley or Kant, and in recent exponents of their systems. But how few are such expositions in our philosophical works ! It is the difference rather than the relation of subject and object that one finds insisted upon in these works. In the treatises mentioned by me, I remember to have met with only one or two small passages, and those in Sankara's commentary on the Upanishads, bearing on the point. In his commentary on the second verse of the sixth *Prasna*, Sankara says :

“वस्तु च भवति किञ्चिन्न ज्ञायते इति चानपपन्नम् रूपञ्च दृश्यते न चास्ति चक्षुरितिवत्...नहि ज्ञानेऽस्ति ज्ञेयं नाम भवति ।”

That is, “It cannot be said that there exists an object, but it cannot be known. It is like saying that a visible object is seen, but there is no eye. Where there is no knowledge, there is no know-

able." The other passage occurs in the commentary on the first *anuvāk* of the second *valli* of the *Taittiriya Upanishad*. It runs as follows :

आत्मनः स्वरूपः शक्तिं न ततो वयतिरिच्यते, अतो नितैव तथापि  
बुद्धेरुपाधिलक्षणा याश्चक्षुरादिद्वारैर्विषयाकारपरिणामिन्या ये  
शब्दाद्याकारावभासास्ते आत्मविज्ञानस्य विषयभूता उत्पाद्यमाना  
एवात्मविज्ञानेन व्याप्ता उपपद्यन्ते । तस्मादात्मविज्ञानावभासाश्च ते  
विज्ञानशब्दाद्याश्च धात्वर्थभूता आत्मन एव धर्म्या विक्रियरूपा इत्य-  
विवेकिभिः परिकल्पयन्ते । यत्तु तद्वद्वक्ष्यो विज्ञानं तत्सवितृप्रकाश-  
वदमुग्रणावच्च ब्रह्मस्वरूपाव्यतिरिक्तं स्वरूपमेव तन्न तत्कारणान्तरसापेक्षं  
नित्यस्वरूपत्वात् । सर्वभावानाञ्च तेनाविभक्तदेशकालाकाशादि-  
कारणत्वाच्च निरतिशयसूक्ष्मत्वाच्च न तस्यान्यदविज्ञेयं सूक्ष्मं व्यवहितं  
विप्रकटं भूतम् भवदभविष्यद्वास्ति, तस्मात् सर्वज्ञं ब्रह्म ।

That is, "The real nature of the self is consciousness, which is never absent from it, and is therefore eternal. Yet the adjuncts of the understanding, the objects of vision and the other senses, taking the form of sounds and other appearances, seem to be objects of (and so different from) self-consciousness, though pervaded by it. Hence the appearances of self-consciousness, which are called *vijnānas* or ideas and are really characteristics of the self even by their root meanings, are imagined by ignorant people to be modifications of the self (produced by an external reality). But conscious-

ness, as it belongs to Brahman, is like the light of the sun and the heat of fire. It is inseparable from Brahman and is his real nature. It cannot be due to an external cause, for it is eternal by nature. As nothing is apart from him, as he is the cause of space, time and ether, and is extremely subtle, there can be nothing,—subtle, past, present or future,—that is unknown to or distant from him. Hence Brahman is all-knowing.”

These extracts show the writer's insight into the truth of the relativity of subject and object, but they lack in perspicuity and fullness of exposition and are not likely to convince readers who have not got light from other sources, native or foreign. And, as I have already said, such passages are very rare in our philosophical books. However, if people could be convinced of Idealism, in however crude a form, they would be more than half way to true Vedantism. It being shown that there can be no object independent of a subject, no matter independent of mind, and therefore no Nature independent of God, the next truth to be brought home to people's mind would be the essential unity of the individual and the Universal Self. A proper understanding of the relativity of subject and object is indeed already an apprehension of the essential unity and infinity of the subject, for the individual mind could not know the world of

sense to be finite in time, space and number unless it were essentially one with the Infinite. But this deeper form of the doctrine of relativity perhaps comes to most minds at a later stage. However, an argumentative exposition of this truth, namely that the knowledge of the finite implies the essential unity of the knower with the Infinite, is as much absent from the works mentioned by me as the first principle of Idealism, that objects are essentially related to knowledge. And the reason also seems to be the same in both cases,—the absence of a clearly conceived method. If it were seen that a comprehensive theory of knowledge, untrammelled by blind reverence for authority and by deference to popular superstitions, is the only possible basis for an acceptable theory of being, true Vedantism would have run the same grand and systematic course in this country as Idealistic Monism has done in Europe from Berkeley and Kant to Hegel, would have met with acceptance from all thoughtful minds, and would have been a far more profound system, as a philosophy and an ideal of life, than the latter system by virtue of the superior inwardness, fervency, and depth of our national character.

Now, to proceed further in our exposition of the true method of philosophy. The human mind, in its gradual progress towards the highest truth, passes

through three successive stages of thought. They are named the Objective; the Subjective and the Absolute. Otherwise they are called Thesis, Antithesis and Synthesis. If they were given a Sanskrit nomenclature, they might be called *Abheda*, *Bheda*, and *Bhedābheda*, that is, unity, difference, and unity-in-difference. All systems of thought belong to one or another of these stages and their truth and value may be estimated by the place they thus occupy. These stages indeed include many sub-stages showing various grades of progress from one to another. In the objective stage, men take things as they appear to be, occupying different parts of space and periods of time and without any essential relation to one another. To the ordinary understanding, the table before me is a table and its being so does not depend upon anything else in the world. In scientific thought, this crass objectivism is indeed greatly modified, and the correlation of things more clearly seen. But science is far from seeing the essential, fundamental, and necessary relations of things, the relations without which things would not be what they are. To it matter is matter and mind mind, and the conception of atomism prevails both in the world of matter and mind, souls being conceived as as much distinct, without any essential link to bind them, as material atoms. Subject and object, mind and

matter, are indeed sharply distinguished in the higher grades of this stage, but the prevailing way of thinking is nevertheless objective in the sense that the subject is conceived very much in the fashion of the object. The categories of time and space, substance and phenomenon, cause and effect, are as much applied to the subject as to the objects. Even God, the Ultimate Reality, is conceived as a substance of which the world is a phenomenon or an assemblage of phenomena, or a cause of which the world is an effect or a series of effects. To the lowest grade of this stage belong the Chárváka system of Indian Philosophy and the Materialistic systems of the west. To a more advanced grade belong our Nyáya and Vaiseshika systems and the Dualistic systems of the west, such as the English and Scotch Intuitionist schools, while our Sánkhyā and Pátanjala systems and the system of Kant are still higher in the same scale, the last containing elements of both the higher stages. To both Kant and Kapila, the knowable world is relative to consciousness, a subjective world, but the relation of mind or the subject to the world is conceived much in the fashion of a substance to its modifications,—modifications caused by an external, objective reality. Hence, objectivism as a stage of thought lingers in both the systems, though it is at the point of

vanishing. In Kant, the existence of the external object is problematic and the idea of a constructive understanding supplying its own matter of knowledge as well as its forms, is suggested. Even the idea of a supreme Unity-in-difference explaining all thought and existence is set forth as a regulative idea. However, what is merely a suggestion in Kant,—a subject creating its own object,—took definite form as a system long before him in the school of Absolute Monism in Indian philosophy, in the philosophy of Parmenides in ancient Greece, latterly in Spinoza, and after Kant in Fichte. These systems represent the subjective stage of thought, in which the object finds its explanation, and is in fact merged, in the subject. In cruder forms the same stage of thought is found in the Buddhist Vijnánaváda, in the Idealism of Bishop Berkeley and in the Sensationalism of David Hume. In all these systems, the antithesis of subject and object, of the Infinite and the finite, of the Eternal and the changing, of the one and the many, is so sharply drawn, that only the first of these pairs of correlatives is pronounced real, and the other set down as only apparent. But in fact if the latter is inexplicable without reference to the former, is not the former equally unmeaning without the latter? Really the difference of these pairs is founded on their relation and their relation on

their difference. Merge the object in the subject, and the distinction itself disappears and the subjectivity of the subject becomes unmeaning. Deny the reality of the finite, and the Infinite becomes meaningless. Say that there is really no change, the Eternal alone existing, and you see that the Eternal itself disappears as a meaningless abstraction. We thus come in sight of the highest stage of thought, the Absolute, the stage of synthesis or unity-in-difference. In Europe it is associated with the name of Hegel. As I have already said, we find anticipations of it in this country in the *Bhagavadgītā* and in the philosophy of Rāmānuja. However, I shall try to make this stage of thought somewhat clear to you by briefly explaining its logical basis.

The logic that dominates ordinary and scientific thought, as well as the philosophical systems of the subjective stage, is what is called Formal or Deductive Logic, associated in Europe with the name of Aristotle. Its fundamental principles,—principles which it uses in every stage and department of knowledge,—are those of Identity and Contradiction. It fixes a thing once for all in its self-identity, distinguishing it from other things, and preserves it against self-contradiction. To it, A is A and is in no sense not-A. That this is a necessary movement of thought, is undoubted.



Ordinary life and thought would be impossible if we were to deny the natural distinctions of things and confound them with one another, for instance fire with water or man with woman. But as soon as we rise to the higher sphere of speculative thought, and try to understand the ultimate nature of things by the light of this logic, we see that it fails us. The puzzles and perplexities of philosophical systems are mostly due to the application of the laws of identity and contradiction to conceptions which refuse to be governed by them. The fact is that the differences of things, though real enough, are founded on a relation, a unity, so deep and subtle, that it eludes not only the common understanding, but also scientific thought, and even among philosophers few suspect it and fewer still grasp it with any degree of clearness, far less formulate it as a logical principle. Fire and water are indeed different and exclude each other; but they are both related to each other by their common relation to the Intelligence which knows them and whose knowing constitutes their being. Their distinction is thus founded on a relation, their difference on a unity, their contrariety on an identity. However absurd, therefore, it may seem to the common understanding, there is a sense in which water is one with fire or *is* fire. In their oneness with the

Supreme Intelligence which reproduces itself in our intelligence and to the absoluteness of which we may rise in our moments of supreme enlightenment, they *are* one,

“अभेदः परमात्मनि” ।

This is the Hegelian principle of the identity of contrarities, of the unity of differences, which has brought upon itself so much derision from shallow minds in Europe, but which will no doubt find, as soon as it is understood, a quite different reception in a country where the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavadgita* have inspired and guided the thoughts and aspirations of thinking and earnest men. The principle means that, you cannot truly know a thing, either in Nature or in human history, by merely fixing it in its bare self-identity. Its being, its mere identity with itself,—is, to knowledge, nothing, for it discloses and really consists in differences, contrarities, without which it is unthinkable and unmeaning. To know a thing truly, you must know also its relation to its opposite,—which again has its own opposite, and so on,—and to the Supreme Unity, the Unity of Self-consciousness, in which all differences are ultimately unified,—unified not by being merged in it, but by being held as differences in a Unity. This Unity alone is truly absolute, an

Identity without contradiction, a Reality which, though containing infinite internal difference, *svagata bheda*, is without external difference, without relation to anything external to it. Thesis, antithesis and synthesis are therefore the three movements through which the human mind passes in arriving at the true and full knowledge of a thing. They are not detached or unconnected movements, for in each the others are implicitly contained. Each step is only a progress towards explicitness, the last bringing the whole process to full clearness. In thesis or the simple apprehension of a thing,—wrongly called sensuous perception,—for no knowledge is merely sensuous,—its difference from and relation to other things and the knowing intelligence is already implied. In understanding or scientific knowledge, and in imperfect philosophical systems, the element of difference is clearly brought out, while reason or true philosophical knowledge finally reveals the necessary relation of all things to a Supreme Unity of Consciousness. This, in its barest outline, is the Dialectic Method of Hegel, which represents the high-water mark of western speculation. This method leads directly to a system of Absolute Idealism which I may briefly sketch as follows. An analysis of knowledge,—any act of knowledge however common, for instance that of the note-book

before me—discloses two distinct but related terms in it, the subject and the object. The subject is distinct from the object, but related to it, and the object is distinct from the subject, but related to it. Neither can be known or thought of except in relation to and distinction from the other. The popular idea that an object can exist unrelated to a subject, and a subject unrelated to an object, an idea which imperfect philosophical systems advocate as a doctrine, is the result of abstraction. We can affirm only what we know, and the minimum of existence that we know is a subject and an object distinct from and related to each other. Thus it is not two realities that we know, or a difference or relation of two realities : it is a complex unity, an individual, a person, that we know. The difference that we know is a conscious difference, a difference known by, and in that sense constituted by, a self-conscious being. He makes the difference and the limitation implied in it and transcends it by virtue of his self-consciousness. The Self-conscious Being, therefore, whom we know in every act of knowledge, is really infinite, with a moment of finitude in it. In knowing the limitations of space, he knows himself as above them. In knowing parts of space, he knows them as parts of an integral whole related to him. In knowing successive moments of time, he knows himself as

above succession, as the Eternal. In knowing every event, he knows it as belonging to an infinite series related to him. The limitations of time and space and the limitations of knowledge implied in them, are indeed distinct from the Infinite, but as they are related to it, and are the moments or movements through which it manifests itself, they are not unreal, as our *Máyávádis* and their prototypes in the west conclude. An Infinite without finite moments distinct from and yet related to it, and an Eternal without a succession of events distinct from and yet related to it, are abstractions to be rejected and not realities to be worshipped. The finite self has therefore a real place in the Infinite and cannot be merged in it by any process of reasoning or spiritual exercise. It is implied in every stage of knowledge, however refined, and in every stage of spiritual exaltation, however lofty. When the abstract and really false conception of a merely sensuous object has been fully sublated, and that of a finite self independent of the Infinite,—it is seen that in every act of knowledge the real transcendental object known is the Infinite, the supreme, all-comprehensive Self, and the real, transcendental subject is the finite self, one with the Infinite, yet distinct from it as an eternally growing individual, gradually enjoying and absorbing the perfections of the

Infinite. In this eternally growing participation in the life of the Infinite consists the ethical and spiritual life of the finite self, and in the process of perfecting finite souls by making them participate more and more in his perfections, consists the Infinite's eternal love for them.

Now, the high and permanent value of the *Bhagavadgītā* as a manual of spiritual life, lies in this, that though not laying down a clear method like the one I have indicated, and showing how it leads to a system of theoretical and practical philosophy, it has nevertheless a firm grasp of the fundamental truths of such a system. Though influenced by the Sankhya Philosophy, it never gives way to its irresolvable Dualism. Though accepting the Spiritual Monism of the Vedānta, it does not lose faith in Nature. Though possessing a real vision of the Eternal, the Immutable, it nevertheless sees the reality of change and action. Though it has a deep insight into the oneness of the individual with the Universal Self, it never loses sight of their moral relationship,—the love of the latter for the former and the devotion and reverence which the latter owes to the former. How unlike is all this to those impatient and one-sided systems which are led by the exigencies of their logic of non-contradiction to deny the truth of one aspect of reality and represent the other as the sole reality, thus practi-

cally making the latter unmeaning and thereby opening wide the gates of scepticism and irreligion. The author of the *Bhagavadgītā*, though not clearly aware of a higher logic than the prevailing one, has a truly synthetic grasp of truth and sees that it is by no means so simple a thing as the prevailing systems imagine it to be, the systems, for instance, of the Sāṅkhyas and the Buddhists, the Karmakāṇdis and the Sannyāsis,—that it is somewhere between the contradictions which baffle them and drive them to their extremes. It is this singularly deep insight of our author into the highest truth, that has hitherto formed and will ever form his chief claim to the reverence of his fellow-men here and in countries far off from his own. May the spirit of God guide us all to the truth as it is in him !

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## CHAPTER VIII

### The *Gīta* Ideal of *Bhakti* compared with the Vaishnava Ideal

In our last lecture we have seen what the true ideal of knowledge is, the ideal which is set forth in the form of a prophetic vision by the author of the *Gīta* and is reasoned out as a system by the Dialectic Method of Hegel. If you are not satisfied with the lines of reasoning in its support sketched in that lecture, I must refer you to my *Brahmajijnāsā* and my *Philosophy of Brāhmaism* for further elucidation of the subject. In these treatises I defend at some length the doctrine of unity in difference, *Bhedābhedavāda*, which I consider to be the central philosophy of the *Gīta* and which seems to me to be the true basis of *bhakti*. I think that it is absolutely necessary for the purposes of true spiritual religion—of the culture of emotional and practical piety—to have a firm grasp of this doctrine. For neither Dualism nor Monism can supply a real basis of *bhakti*. Dualism worships an unknown God, a God merely believed in and not seen by the vision of direct knowledge. As we have already seen, such a God is not the true God, the Infinite, for as Nature and the individual self are considered as apart from, independent of, him



or, what is practically the same thing, their essential relation to and dependence on him are not understood and therefore not truly believed in—he is, to such a worshipper, only a finite being of superhuman powers. On the other hand, Absolute Monism, to which the individual self is merely a datum of *avidyā*, ignorance, and therefore disappears in the light of true knowledge, looks upon *bhakti* as a mere means of reaching the higher stages of *jñāna*. When one has reached them, *bhakti* is not only useless, but impossible, for it is, properly speaking, a relation of the higher and the lower, and in true *jñāna*, which, to such a Monist, reveals one absolute unity without the least tinge of difference, there is no higher and lower. If any one talks of *bhakti* there, as even the advocates of Absolute Monism do sometimes, that *bhakti* is only another name for *jñāna*. But it does not appear how, from the standpoint of *jñāna* as conceived by the Absolute Monist, its higher stages, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi*, explained in our fifth lecture, remain objects of *sādhana*, goals to be reached. From the standpoint of the Māyā doctrine, there is no *sādhaka*, aspirant after spiritual life and therefore, properly speaking, no *sādhya* either,—no object to be aspired after. The *sādhaka* being only phenomenal, only appearing to be real and not really real, was never really existent. In some

mysterious, unspeakable way, he, the non-existent, imagined himself to be existent before he, in the same unspeakable way, knew himself to be unreal. Now that he has known himself to be unreal, real only in appearance, it is not evident why he should keep up the appearance and further delude himself that he is a *sādhaka* distinct from the *sādhya*, and that the latter is his goal and must be reached by a process of *sādhana*. The Absolute ceases to be a goal the moment it is known that it is alone and that there is no relative to reach it. There being no *sādhya* therefore, and no *sādhaka*, there is no room for *jñāna*—for *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* or *samādhi*—as an object of *sādhana* or spiritual culture. There is indeed *jñāna* in the Absolute. He is *jñānam*, absolute knowledge. But knowledge, as it is in him, is eternally complete and not a thing to be aspired after or reached. What the aspirant after union with Brahman really seeks, is not Brahman's eternally complete self-knowledge, but the *knowledge*, undimmed and unchanged, *that he is in essence one with Brahman*. It is the only form of knowledge possible for the finite, and it implies both unity and difference. For the finite to discard its finitude and become absolutely one with the Infinite, is impossible. That the Māyāvādī thinks it is possible, shows only the imperfect power of analysis he possesses. Even in the high-

est stage of *saṁādhi*, there is an element of difference, *bheda*, though it is very different from the *sthūla bheda*, crude difference, of the Dualist. It may be, as Yogi Sadānanda says in his *Vedāntasāra*, that in *nirvikalpaka saṁādhi* difference is *prachchhanna*, hidden, that is, not attended to ; but it is there all the same. It is difference, then, as well as unity, which makes *sādhana* possible, whether that *sādhana* is *jñāna*, *bhakti* or *karma*. It is therefore most unreasonable for the Absolute Monist to say that *bhakti* implies difference and *jñāna* does not. The latter implies difference as much as the former, and the Māyāvādī, in sticking to the culture of *jñāna* and belittling *bhakti* and *karma*, simply stultifies himself. To be consistent, he should give up all *sādhana*s whatever,—give up *jñāna* as well as *bhakti* and *karma*,—and let unreal *avidyā* run its shadowy course. It cannot be wise to pursue a shadow with weapons which are themselves shadows. However, if our characterisation of *jñāna* as implying difference is right, it will be seen that *jñāna* comprehends *bhakti* as an element or aspect. In fact *jñāna* and *bhakti*, knowledge and reverential love, are only two aspects of the same act or movement of the soul. The Infinite cannot truly be known without being loved and revered. A true vision of God must invariably be accompanied by emotions. These

emotions are called *ānandam* in the *Upanishads*. The *Máyāvādī* too recognises *ānandam* as a part or element of *jñāna* in its higher stages. When duly analysed, however, this *ānandam* is found to be love and reverence. The *Máyāvādī*, therefore, in so far as he is a *jñānī*, in so far as he enjoys *jñānam*, is a *bhakta* too, though he is not fully aware of it. If he were to be fully aware of it, and to give up the culture of *bhakti* in order to be a consistent Monist, he would have to give up the culture of *jñāna* too, for, as we have already seen, the two are inseparably conjoined. We see then how important it is, for the purpose of establishing the culture of *bhakti* on a true basis, firm and unshakable by doubts, to have a deep and clear insight into the doctrine of unity-in-difference. It must be clearly seen that no act of knowledge, not even the semblance or appearance of knowledge, would be possible without the relation of unity and difference as between the Infinite and the finite. Every act of knowing the world reveals our unity with it. Every such act manifests a part or aspect of the world as a form of *our* consciousness. In knowing the world we find ourselves,—our self—in it as its very constitutive principle, for everything we know must be thought of in terms of consciousness. On the other hand, every such act reveals also our difference from the world, a

difference not of kind, but of degree. What we know each moment was, in a sense, external to, beyond, our individual consciousness when we were not aware of it. Our individual life is in a constant flux, and is being acted on and determined by the Universal. Every moment things—and all things are, to true philosophy, thoughts, thoughts of God—are entering our finite life and going out of it, returning into and returning from it. Our preception, our recollection and oblivion, our sleeping, dreaming and waking, are the various forms of the flux,—this continuous colloquy between God and man. Now, this relation between the part and the whole, the *vyashti* and the *samashhti* souls, unmistakably shows both their unity and difference. Neither of these moments of the relation can be denied or ignored. Their co-existence may be mysterious, inscrutable, and I confess that the more I think of it the more inscrutable it seems to me. All who practise *samādhi* must have felt more or less strongly tempted to deny the difference, and pronounce it apparent, *māyika*. But the temptation must be resisted. As we have already seen, when all differences have been referred to *Māyā*, *Māyā* herself remains unexplained and shows how futile is the philosophy that looks to her for the final solution of its problems. As we have just seen, *samādhi* itself and the processes of *sādhana*

leading up to it would be impossible if the Infinite were alone and there existed no finite soul related to it. And we have seen before that an Infinite without a finite moment distinct from and yet one with it, and an Eternal without a world of change which it makes possible and yet transcends, are mere abstractions. However inscrutable, therefore, may be the difference of the finite from the Infinite to minds habituated to metaphysical speculation and to the practice of *samādhi*, it is nevertheless real, and must always be held clearly in view as the true basis not only of *bhakti*, but of all possible forms of *sādhana*, *jñāna* itself included. There can be no *sādhana* without a real *sādhaka* and a real *sādhya* distinct from and yet related to each other.

Coming now to the *Gītā* teaching on *Bhakti*, we find that it is essentially the same teaching that we find in the *Upanishads*—even in the most ancient of them. Except in the last verse of the *Svetāsvatara Upanishad*, perhaps the most modern of the ancient twelve *Upanishads*, *bhakti* is not mentioned by name anywhere in them. But the thing, though not the name, is there in its true nature—devotion to the real Self, to the Infinite. It appears under the various names of *jñāna*, *vidyā*, *yoga*, *darshana*, *upāsana* &c. That these processes or movements of the soul have an emo-

tional aspect, is recognised in the teaching that the Self should be worshipped or contemplated as a dear object—‘आत्मानमेव प्रियमुपासीत’। As the Self is nearer than all other objects, it is taught to be dearer than son, riches and all other things. The *Bṛihdāraṇyaka*, I. 4, 8, says :

तदेतत् प्रियः पुत्रात् प्रियो वित्तात् प्रियोऽन्यस्मात् सर्वस्वादन्तरतः  
यदयमात्मा । स योऽन्यमात्मानं प्रियं ब्रूयाच्च ब्रूयात् प्रियं रोतुस्त्व-  
त्तीतीश्वरो ह तथैव स्वादात्मानमेव प्रियमुपासीत । य आत्मानमेव  
प्रियमुपास्ते न ह्यस्य प्रियं प्रमायुक्तं भवति ॥

That is, “It is dearer than son, dearer than riches, dearer than any other thing, because this Self is nearer than all. If any one says to another who pronounces any other thing to be dearer than the self, ‘What is dear to you will perish,’ he is quite competent to say so, for what he says is true. One should worship the Self alone as dear. Of him who worships the Self alone as dear, the dear thing never perishes.”

Now, this text, properly understood, would seem to contain the very first principle of the *Bhakti Śāstra*, the science of *bhakti*. The Self is dear to all of us by our very constitution. And other things—things supposed to be other,—are dear in proportion as they are assimilated to the Self, felt to be one with or related to the Self. According to the same law, the more an object is regarded as

unrelated to the Self, the more indifferent or unloving to it, we become. Husband, wife, child, our own caste or race—and all other things dear to us are so for the sake of the Self, to which we assimilate them more or less. This is taught very impressively in the Maitreyī Bráhmāna, which forms a part of the second and fourth chapters of the same Upanishad. Maitreyī, one of the two wives of Yájñavalkya, having inquired of her husband the means of attaining true immortality, which can be obtained only by a knowledge of the true Self, Yájñavalkya is extremely pleased with the lady and exclaims :

प्रिया वतारे नः सती प्रियं भाषस एद्यास्व व्याख्यास्वामि ते  
व्याचक्षाणस्व तु मे निदिध्यासस्वेति । स ह्येवाव न वा अरे पतुः  
कामाय पतिः प्रियो भवति, आत्मनस्तु कामाय पतिः प्रियो भवति ।  
न वा अरे जायायै कामाय जाया प्रिया भवति, आत्मनस्तु कामाय  
जाया प्रिया भवति, न वा अरे पुत्रानां कामाय पुत्राः प्रिया भवन्ति,  
आत्मनस्तु कामाय पुत्राः प्रिया भवन्ति । न वा अरे वित्तस्य  
कामाय वित्तं प्रियं भवति आत्मनस्तु कामाय वित्तं प्रियं भवति ।  
न वा अरे ब्रह्मण्यै कामाय ब्रह्म प्रियं भवति, आत्मनस्तु कामाय ब्रह्म  
प्रियं भवति । न वा अरे क्षत्रस्य कामाय क्षत्रं प्रियं भवति,  
आत्मनस्तु कामाय क्षत्रं प्रियं भवति । न वा अरे लोकाणां  
कामाय लोकाः प्रिया भवन्ति, आत्मनस्तु कामाय लोकाः  
प्रिया भवन्ति । न वा अरे देवानां कामाय देवाः प्रिया भवन्ति, आत्म-  
नस्तु कामाय देवाः प्रिया भवन्ति । न वा अरे भूतानां कामाय भूतानि



प्रियानि भवन्ति आत्मनस्तु कामाय भूतानि प्रियानि भवन्ति ।  
 न वा अरे सर्वस्य कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवति, आत्मनस्तु कामाय  
 सर्वं प्रियं भवति । आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो  
 निदिध्यासितव्यो मैत्रेयि, आत्मनो वा अरे दर्शनेन श्रवणेन मत्वा  
 विज्ञानेनेदं सर्वं विदितम् । ( २।४।४,५ )

That is, "Behold you are dear to me already, and now you say what is dear. Come, sit down, I will explain the matter to you. Endeavour to understand my explanation. Behold, not for the sake of the husband is the husband dear, but for the sake of the Self is the husband dear. Not for the sake of the wife is the wife dear, but for the sake of the Self is the wife dear. Not for the sake of the sons are the sons dear, but for the sake of the Self are the sons dear. Not for the sake of wealth is wealth dear, but for the sake of the Self is wealth dear. Not for the sake of the Bráhmāna is the Bráhmāna dear, but for the sake of the Self is the Bráhmāna dear. Not for the sake of the Kshatriya is the Kshatriya dear, but for the sake of the Self is the Kshatriya dear. Not for the sake of the worlds are the worlds dear, but for the sake of the Self are the worlds dear. Not for the sake of the gods are the gods dear, but for the sake of the self are the gods dear. Not for the sake of the elements are the elements dear, but for the sake of the Self are the elements dear. Not for

the sake of the universe is the universe dear, but for the sake of the Self is the universe dear. Behold, the Self is to be seen, heard, thought upon and contemplated. O Maitreyi, by seeing, hearing, thinking on and contemplating the Self is all this truly known."

Now, it is not selfishness that the *rishi* thus teaches us. Selfishness is the loving of a small, false, abstract self, considered as apart from, unrelated to, other beings. But what Yájnavalkya teaches is the love of the true, infinite, all-comprehending Self, as he makes quite clear in the section I refer to, and as appears already from the last sentence of the extract I have given. One more short quotation will make the matter clearer. Yájnavalkya says :—"इदं ब्रह्म, इदं क्षत्रम्, इमे लोकाः, इमे देवाः, इमानि भूतानि, इदं सर्वं यदयमात्मा ।" That is, "This Bráhma caste, this Kshatriya caste, these worlds, these gods, these elements, all this is the Self." The fact then is, that though the love of the Self is in all, and is the germ of *bhakti*, it does not deserve the name in most cases because in most men finite objects are ignorantly identified with the Self, and the love that is due to the Infinite is lavished on them. Finite objects are indeed more or less sources of happiness, for they are parts or moments of the Infinite, but the Infinite alone is blissful, the embodiment and source of inexhaust-

ible happiness and therefore the only object of perfect love. The 'Brahmánanda Valli of the *Taittiriya Upanishad* says :

“यद्दै तत् सुकृतम् रसो वै सः । रसं ह्येवायं लब्ध्वा नन्दी भवति ।  
को ह्येवान्धात् कः प्राप्यात् यदेष आकाश आनन्दो न स्यात् । एष  
ह्येवानन्दयति । यदा ह्येवैष एतस्मिन्नदृष्टोऽनात्मनेऽनिरुक्तेऽनिलयने-  
ऽभयं प्रतिष्ठां विन्दते अथ सोऽभयं गतो भवति ।”

That is, “That which is self-made (that is, self-existent) is verily joy. It is by gaining joy that the creature becomes happy. Who could breathe, who could live, if this blissful One did not exist in the heart? It is this who gives happiness. It is only when the creature gains an immovable footing on this invisable, incorporeal, inscrutable and self-supported One, that he becomes fearless.”

The most impressive exposition in the *Upanishads* of the Infinite and his blissfulness is to be found in the Nárada-Sanat Kumara-Sambáda of the *Chhândogya Upanishad* (Chap. VII). After a long enumeration of categories forming an ascending series, Sanatkumára at last comes to the Bhuman, the Infinite, which he pronounces to be alone perfectly blissful. He says :— यो वै भूमा तत्सुखं नादृष्टे सुखमस्ति, भूमेव सुखम् । That is, “The Infinite is bliss. There is no bliss in the finite, the Infinite alone is bliss.” The definition of the Infinite that follows has never been excelled, says Max Muller, by any since given. The *rishi* says :—

यत्र नान्यत्पश्यति नान्यच्छृणोति नान्यद विजानाति स भूमा ।  
 अथ यन्नान्यत् पश्यत्यन्यच्छृणोत्यन्यद विजानाति तदत्यम् । यो वै भूमा  
 तदमृतम् अर्थायद-यं तन्मर्तम् । स भगवः कस्मिन् प्रतिष्ठित इति खेमहिम्नि  
 यदि वा न महिम्नोति । गो अश्वमिह महिमेत्याचक्षते हस्ति हिरण्यं  
 दास भार्यत्र स्त्रेबाण्यायतनानीति । नाहमेवं ब्रवीमीति होवाचान्यो-  
 ह्यन्यस्मिन् प्रतिष्ठित इति । स एवाधस्तात् स उपरिष्ठात् स पश्चात् स  
 पुरस्तात् स दक्षिणतः स उत्तरतः स एवेदं सर्वम् इति । अथातोऽहं-  
 कारादिषु एव—अहमेवाधस्ताद् अहमुपरिष्ठाद् अहं पश्चाद् अहं  
 पुरस्ताद् अहं दक्षिणतोऽहमुत्तरतोऽहमेवेदं सर्वमिति । अथात  
 आत्मादिषु एव आत्मैवाधस्तात् आत्मोपरिष्ठात् आत्मा पश्चात् आत्मा  
 पुरस्तात् आत्मा दक्षिणतः, आत्मोत्तरतः आत्मैवेदं सर्वमिति । स वा  
 एष एवं पश्यन् एवं मग्नान् एवं विजानन् आत्मरतिशुद्धात्मक्रीड आत्म-  
 मिथुन आत्मानन्दः स स्वराड्भवति तस्य सर्वेषु लोकेषु कामचारो  
 भवति । अथ येन्यथाऽती विदुरन्यरजानस्ते क्षयलोका भवन्ति, तेषां  
 सर्वेषु लोकेषु कामचारो भवति ॥

That is, "Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else,—that is the Infinite. Where, however, one sees something else, understands something else,—that is the finite. • That which is Infinite is immortal, that which is finite is mortal. Sir, (says Nárada to Sanatkumára), in what does the Infinite rest? In its own greatness, (answers Sanatkumára)—or not even in greatness. In the world, they call cows, horses, elephants, gold, slaves, wives, fields and

houses as so much greatness. I do not mean this, he said, because, in that case, one thing rests upon another. It (that is, the Infinite) alone is below, it is above, it is behind, it is before, it is to the right, it is to the left, it is all this. Then follows an exposition in which the Infinite is seen as I. I alone am below, I am above, I am behind, I am before, I am to the right, I am to the left, I am all this. Then follows an exposition in which the Infinite is identified with the self: The Self alone is below, the Self is above, the Self is behind, the Self is before, the Self is to the right, the Self is to the left, the Self is all this. One who sees thus, thinks thus, and understands thus, loves the Self, revels in the Self, enjoys the company of the Self, and rejoices in the Self. He becomes *svarāt*, self-ruled, he becomes independent in all the worlds. While those that know otherwise, are ruled by others and live in perishable worlds. And they become dependent in all the worlds."

Now, I have made this long extract from the *Chhāndogya* because I think that in understanding the true philosophy of *bhakti*, it is a help the value of which cannot be exaggerated. It would be out of place for me here to give a philosophical explanation of it. Those who followed my last lecture, that on *jñāna*, must understand its purport. What is most important in *bhakti* is that the true

character of the *sādhya*, the real object of worship and aspiration, should be clearly grasped. Any feeling of love, admiration or reverence is not *bhakti* in its religious sense. It is only those feelings, the feelings of awe, admiration, reverence, love and self-consecration, that rise in the heart in the presence of the Infinite, that deserve the name of *bhakti* in its spiritual sense and can have the elevating effect on practical character which we expect from religious feelings. Other feelings, feelings of love and admiration, called forth by finite objects, however great and beautiful, may, if they are pure, help the spiritual life ; but we cannot identify them with religious feelings without the most disastrous effects on practical religion. It is therefore most important that in our strivings after true *bhakti* we should see that it is the Infinite and not any finite object, however attractive, that is always before us. And in estimating the true value of a system of *bhakti*, we should not be misled by the number of sweet and beautiful things that are said, things which may beguile our imagination and give us a satisfaction purely human, but nevertheless keep us as far as possible from the kingdom of heaven ; we should rather see how far it knows the true Infinite—the True, the Good and the Beautiful, and brings it nearer the human heart, which can be satisfied by the Infinite and the Infinite alone.

Now, it seems to me that the author of the *Gītā* has truly grasped the ideal of *bhakti* set forth in the *Upanishads* and that to him the Infinite and the Infinite alone is the object of worship and aspiration. To those who read his book with an unbiassed mind, this will be evident from every part of it. But the sixth, the eleventh and the twelfth chapters bring this out most prominently. In the sixth we are taught to concentrate our thoughts on the Self,

आत्मसंख्यं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ।

“Fixing the mind on the Self, one should cease from thinking anything.” I explained this *dhyāna* process in my fifth lecture, that on *yoga*, and will not repeat that explanation. The method of reaching the Self taught in the chapter is what is called the *vyatireka prāṇālī*, the method of exclusion or analysis. The thought of objects is excluded as much as possible and the Self is sought to be realised in its pure subjectivity. The method is difficult, and impatient worshippers avoid it and seek easier ways of realising God, not knowing how totally they are misled. They think this method is not only difficult, but also fruitless so far as *bhakti* is concerned, for it, as they think, excites no emotions in the heart. Not so thinks the author of the *Gītā*. He says :

युञ्जन्नेव सदात्मानं योगी विद्यतकल्लषः ।

सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ॥

“Thus ever practising *ātmayoga*, the *yogin*, freed from sin, obtains with ease the intense joy of touching Brahman.”

The *anvaya prandī*, the method of inclusion or synthesis, is adopted in the eleventh chapter, and the worshipper is taught to realise God as the *Visvarūpa*, the All-formed, the Cosmic Soul. I have spoken of this *sādhana* in my sixth lecture, that on the Vedānta, and need not repeat my remarks. This exercise, when properly understood and earnestly practised, acts as an antidote against idolatry and the wrong or one-sided form of *nirākāropāsana* prevailing among some of those who avoid idolatry. When one knows the whole world to be the form or image of God—knows in what sense objects in space and time may be said to be the image of the Infinite, and in what sense they may not be so called,—one feels the needlessness, nay the mischief, of having an idol before him. Those who use idols as helps to worship and teach others to use them, show only how far they are from a knowledge of the Infinite and of the nature of the worship truly due to him. The wrong or one-sided form of *nirākāropāsana* I have referred to consists in the attempt to exclude the world of



sense from the idea of God as so much dead matter or *avidyā* and to fix the mind exclusively on the *avyakta*, the unmanifested essence of consciousness,—consciousness as unmanifested in the form of the world. The form of *upāsana* which neither worships the *Visvarupa* nor fixes the mind on the Self that we call our own as the Infinite and Eternal, but which worships a God which it knows not, but only fancies, was, it seems, unknown to the author of the *Gītā*. At any rate, he does not speak of it. If he had taken notice of it, he would perhaps have spoken of it as utterly baseless and leading ultimately to Atheism. What he takes notice of is the practice of those who proceed exclusively on the *vyatireka prāṇī*, and neglecting the worship of the *Visvarupa*, the *saguna* aspect of Brahman, devote themselves exclusively to the *Avyakta*, his unmanifested or *nirguna* aspect. On this he, in the beginning of his twelfth chapter, pronounces a mild condemnation. The verses embodying this condemnation are variously interpreted by various commentators. To me, it seems that the question is, Who are the wiser *yogis*—योगवित्तमाः—which of the parties know the wiser path?—whether those who recognise both the methods referred to or those who reject the *anvaya prāṇī*, neglect the worship of the *saguna* and seek to reach the *nirguna* without the help of *saguna*

worship? As recognising both the *saguna* and *nirguna*, immanent and transcendent, aspects of the Deity, the author of the *Gita* cannot take sides with any party adopting only one of the forms of worship to the exclusion of the other. Sectarian interpretations of the verses are therefore bound to be wrong. What the author actually does is that he pronounces the attempt to reach the *nirguna* and to be established in it without the help of *saguna* worship as a very difficult method. He says :

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतषाम् ।

अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥

i.e., "Greater is their trouble whose hearts are set on the Unmanifested, for the unmanifested goal is hard for the embodied to reach." The author does not say that the Unmanifested cannot be reached. He knows that it must be reached, and he thinks, and thinks rightly, that the worship of the *Saguna* as *Visvarupa* makes the gradual reaching of the goal a comparatively easy one. However, most of the remaining verses of the chapter are devoted to an enumeration of the practical results of *bhakti*—the moral excellences which true *bhakti* develops in the character of the pious,—a most important subject, but one which we must reserve for a subsequent lecture. Here I shall rather deal

with the dangers to which true *bhakti*, as enun-  
 ciated by the author of the *Gītā*, is exposed, exposed  
 by his own rather mistaken policy of calling the  
 Absolute, the Formless, the Nameless, by the  
 name of an historical or mythical person, namely  
 Krishna. He himself is indeed free from the danger.  
 Though calling the object of his worship by this  
 much abused name, he never teaches us to con-  
 template the form of the epic or the Puranic Krishna  
 or sing his praises as a hero or a lover. Neither  
 does he prescribe material offerings to his image.  
 He knows that images, either actual or mental,  
 are worshipped by the ignorant, and leaves, flowers,  
 eatables and drinks are offered to them, and that  
 such worship, if offered with reverence, has a  
 moral effect on the heart, softening and purifying  
 it, and preparing it for the attainment of true  
 knowledge and the practice of true worship. And  
 so he says that God accepts such worship and  
 bestows on the worshipper the fruit due to it.  
 But he knows also that such worship is not the  
 proper worship of God, and that it cannot, in itself,  
 lead to union with him. This will be evident from  
 the following verses :—

यो यो यां यां तनूँ भक्तः अहयाच्चित्तुमिच्छति ।

तस्य तस्यैवास्मादां अस्मां तामेव विदधान्यहम् ॥

स तथा श्रद्धया युक्तस्सगाराधनमीहते ।  
 लभते च ततः कामान् मयैव विहितान् हि तान् ॥  
 अन्तवत्तु फलं तेषां तद्भवत्यर्थमेधसाम् ।  
 देवान् देवयजो यान्ति मद्भक्ता यान्ति मामपि ॥  
 अर्प्यक्तम् व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।  
 परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥ VII. 21-24

That is, "Whatever devotee wishes to worship whatever form, I give him unflinching faith in that. Possessed of that faith, he engages in the worship of that form, and from such worship he obtains those desired objects that are ordained by me. But the fruits obtained by such men of small intelligence have an end. The worshippers of the *devas* go to the *devas*, and my worshippers come to me. Fools regard me, the Unmanifested, as manifested, not knowing my higher transcendent nature. Again, in the 9th chapter,

येऽप्यन्यदेवता भक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।  
 तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्तप्रविधिपूर्वकम् ॥  
 अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च ।  
 न तु मामभिजानन्ति तत्ते नातश्चरन्ति ते ॥  
 यान्ति देवव्रता देवान् पितॄन् यान्ति पितृव्रताः ।  
 भूतानि यान्ति भूतेजसा यान्ति यदयजिनोऽपि माम् ॥  
 पद्मं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।  
 तदहं भक्त प्रपद्यते ममैव प्रयतात्मनः ॥

यत् करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।

यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत् कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥ IX. 23—27.

That is, "Even those who, devoted to other deities, worship them with faith, really worship me in an improper way, (that is, in ignorance of my true nature). I am the receiver and lord of all sacrifices. They, that is, the sacrificers, do not know me as I am, and hence they fall. The votaries of the *devas* go to the *devas*, and those of the manes to the manes. The worshippers of the *bhūtas* (lower gods) go to the *bhūtas*, while my worshippers come to me. If a devotee offers to me leaves, flowers, fruits or water with reverence, I accept such reverent offerings from a pure-hearted man. Whatever thou dost, whatever thou enjoyest whatever thou sacrificest, whatever thou givest, whatever austerities thou practisest, —do all unto me."

But does not the author of the *Gītā* actually prescribe sacrifices to the gods and defend them as due to them, to whom, as he says, we owe the things we enjoy and to whom we should, as he argues, offer them before we use them? Yes, I answer, he does all this as a believer in super-human beings like most ancient thinkers, as sharing in the strange delusion, now shaken off even by the least thoughtful, that such beings, if they at all

exist, delight in offerings of burnt *ghee*, fruits, and animals, and as a man of extremely conservative instincts, disinclined to a degree to breaking with the past and content to keep his new wine in old wine-skins. But if he defends sacrifices, he condemns the worldly and other-worldly desires that prompted them and thus undermines their very basis. And what is more, he sees what ordinary *devavādīs* do not, that the very thought of worshipping devas and making material offerings to them interferes with entire devotion to Brahman, with what he calls *Brahma-nishthā* and *Brahma-samādhi*, and he thus makes the strange proposal, characteristic of extreme conservatives like him, that in going through sacrifices we should try to realise all things connected with them as Brahman, so that they may not affect our concentration on Brahman and stand in the way of our final union with him. He says :

ब्रह्मापणं ब्रह्मद्वित्रं ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हतम् ।

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥ (IV. 25.)

That is, "He who realises *karma* (that is, sacrifice) as full of Brahman, to whom the sacrificing ladle is Brahman, the *ghee* Brahman, the fire Brahman and the sacrificer himself Brahman, goes to Brahman alone (and not to any lesser deity)."

To the author of the *Gita*, therefore, sacrifices

to the lesser deities are of the nature of a 'concession to the ignorant and do not form an integral part of his system of *Bhakti-sādhana*. What place they occupy in his scheme of *karma*, we shall see in another lecture. As to the culture of *bhakti*, his *Sādhya* being the Infinite, the Absolute, his *sādhana* naturally consists in the realisation of God in Nature and in the heart, in deepening the feelings which flow from such realisation and in regulating practical conduct by the ideals revealed in such elevating acts of communion with the Absolute.

However, the mischief done by his conservatism,—his calling the Absolute by the name of Krishna, his sanction of deva worship and of sacrifices, is undoubted. Though he does not teach us to worship the image of Krishna, such worship forms the chief feature of the religion of those in whose lips the praise of the *Gītā* is most heard, I mean the Vaishnavas. Though he does not recommend the praise of Krishna's exploits, heroic or amorous, such praise forms the very staple of Vaishnava *bhakti*. And though fire-sacrifices have never recovered from the shock they received from Buddhism, the external periphrasias of Vaishnava worship are scarcely less elaborate than, if they are not so shocking as, ancient sacrifices. I do not say that the *Bhagavadgītā* is directly responsible for

all this. But that the Vaishnavas receive a powerful support for many of their practices from its teachings just referred to, admits of no doubt. Vishnu-worship existed before the *Gita* was written, and other influences than its teachings tended to remould and develop Vaishnavism and make it assume the form in which we now find it. I have told a part of its history in my first lecture. Another of its chapters may be briefly told now. It seems that to a certain class of people the type of contemplative piety inculcated in books like the *Bhagavadgītā* proved unsatisfactory, even though it gave them a man-God in addition to the unembodied Brahman of the *Upanishads*, so intangible to unreflective minds. These men, more poetic than pious, wanted a more emotional piety. The heroic exploits of Krishna, and even his solemn colloquy with Arjuna in the battle-field, seemed insufficient to move the emotions deeply. They felt that his dealings with the cowherds and cowherdresses of Braja and Brindában must be painted in brighter colours than had been done in the Vaishnava treatises then extant and made the means of developing a sweeter and richer piety than what prevailed at the time. This feeling and the attempt it led to find their first, at any rate their most remarkable, expression in the *Bhāgavata*. The feeling



is expressed in the form of a story which tells us how Vyása felt dejected and dissatisfied, though he had written so many works on religion, among them the *Mahābhārata* and its chief episode, the *Bhagavadgītā*. Nārada told him that he could not but be dissatisfied, as he had not yet sung the praises of the Lord, and suggested to him the writing of the *Bhāgavata*. The story is of course historically worthless. Vyása, the supposed compiler of the Vedas, and Nārada, whom we meet in the *Chhāndogya Upanishad*, could not, even if they were historical persons at all, thus meet and talk of such comparatively later times as that in which the *Mahābhārata* had been used for centuries and, had ceased to give satisfaction and specially when society presented the state of things we find depicted in the *Bhāgavata*. But the story is important as expressing the feeling just referred to. The *Mahābhārata* is indeed full of Krishna, so full, that it is sometimes called the *Krishna Veda*. But the Brindāban-Līlā is not there. This Līlā finds a place in the *Vishnu Purāṇa*, but its poet is too discreet to satisfy the class of people I speak of. There must have been other works of a similar nature in which Krishna's doings were sung. And yet Nārada tells Vyása he has not yet sung the praises of the Lord. The praises left unsung and the short-

coming of the manner of praising hitherto prevalent, are therefore clear, and the *Bhāgavata* was written to supply the omission and the deficiency. How the great scripture of the Vaishnavas has done its appointed work, I have briefly told you in my second lecture of the present series. I need not say anything more on the subject. What I have to say now particularly is that even the *Bhāgavata*, though it inaugurated a new era in Vaishnava history, and was followed by innumerable works expounding and expanding its ideas, failed to satisfy fully the sort of people for whom it was written, and was, not indeed superseded, but largely supplemented by works of a very different class. The *Brahma-vaivarta Purāna*, and the *Nārada Pancharātra* seem to be the chief of this class of works. The earlier forms of these two books seem to be irrecoverably lost, and the forms in which we find them now appear to be very modern. However, they promulgate nothing short of a new species of Vaishnavism very different from the older Vaishnavism of the *Mahābhārata*, the *Harivamsa*, the *Vishnu Purāna* and even that of the *Bhāgavata*. They seem to take their clue from two ideas only suggested but not developed in the *Bhāgavata*. They are, first, that Krishna is not one of the many *avatāras*, incarnations, of God, but God himself in his fullness,

“एते चाप्यकृत्वाः पुंसः कृत्वास्तु भगवान् स्वयम् ” (*Bh. I. 3.28.*) and secondly, that among the many *Gopis* with whom Krishna disported in the *Rāsamandala* at Brindāban, one was a special favourite. These two are made the central ideas in the later Vaishnava literature and are fully developed in it. In the earlier literature, Krishna is an incarnation of Nārāyaṇa or Mahāviṣṇu, the Isvara of the later Vedānta, the *saguna* form of the *nirguna* Para Brahma. The earlier Vaishnava literature generally follows Vedāntic principles, and therefore, as, according to Vedāntic principles, an incarnation, however great, must be partial, Krishna in this literature is only a part of Nārāyaṇa. In the *Vishṇu Purāṇa* Krishna and Balarāma are described as a black and a white hair of Mahāviṣṇu's head; sent down to the earth by him at the request of the *devas*, who were being oppressed by the *asuras* and prayed for protection. Later Vaishnavism rebelled against this idea of its God and conceived and promulgated more exalted ideas of him. Instead of one, it brought in two Krishnas, corresponding to the *saguna* and *nirguna* Brahman of the later Vedānta. The *avātara* Krishna, he whose exploits are sung in the *Mahābhārata* and the literature founded thereon, is, according to it, the incarnation of Nārāyaṇa, whereas the Absolute Krishna, who is

sometimes called *avatīrṇa*, to distinguish him from the *avatāras* or partial incarnations, is, has ever been, and will always be in Brindában and Brindában alone,

“ब्रन्दावनं परित्यज्य पादमेकं न गच्छति ।”

“He does not go a step beyond Brindában.” But the earthly Brindában, with its *Rāsamandala* and its *gopis*, is only a semblance, a miniature image, of the eternal Brindában, where Krishna eternally disports with his consort Rádhá and her companions. Though calling their God *nirguna*, the Vaishnavas of the school mean by the word nothing but freedom from earthly materials. According to them, Krishna is eternally *sākāra*, having a form, and his image is a perfect model of the human form, the male form, having two arms holding a lute with them, and not four-armed, with the four insignia, which is the form of Náráyana, the lower Krishna. Rádhá, on the other hand, is the perfect model of the female form, and is in constant association with Krishna. She, with the other *gopis*, appears to be his mistress, only because the earthly Brindában is not seen by the uninitiated in its relation to the eternal Brindában. However, you see what the fundamental ideas of this later Vaishnavism is, the ideas on which its ideal of *bhakti* is based. Brindában being the very image of heaven, our models of true piety are to be taken from the

persons,—men and women,—who were in direct association with the Lord when he chose to manifest himself there in a visible form—in a form visible to fleshy eyes. These models, and the whole subject of *bhakti*, are very exhaustively dealt with in Krishna Das's *Chaitanya Charitāmṛita* and Rupa Gosvāmi's *Bhakti Rasāmṛita Sindhu*, works which, in respect of the matters dealt with in them, have perhaps no parallel in any other province of the country. Both these authors are Bengalis, and Bengal seems to be the province where the type of Vaishnavism we are dealing with has attained its fullest development. However, *bhakti*, according to these writers, is twofold, *vaidhi*, that which follows law, and *rāgānugā*, that which follows love. The former finds expression in the observance of certain forms of worship and the latter in certain forms of love. As the former is only so much ceremonial, and not real, heartfelt religion, we may leave it out of consideration in our present sketch. The latter is five-fold according to the five *rasas* or feelings into which it finds expression, namely,—*sānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya*, and *madhurā*. The *sānta rasa* is simple reverence for the Lord, leading to a life of piety and purity. It is the *bhakti* of such *jñānis* as Sanaka, Sananda and Sanatkumāra. *Dāsyā* is the feeling that a faithful servant feels for his

master. The best *sāstric* model of *dāsya bhakti* is Uddhava. Bhishma, Bidura and Parikshit may be mentioned as others of the same class. *Sakhya* is the feeling of a friend for a friend. Such a feeling and a relation to which it led, is said to have existed between Krishna and such of the *gopas* as Sridāma, Sudāma and Subala and the five Pándava brothers, specially Arjuna, all of whom knew that their friend was the Divine Being himself. *Vātsalya* is the love of a parent for his or her child. With reference to Krishna, it is such a feeling as Nanda or Yasodā, Vasudeva or Devakī, felt for him, a feeling arising from the consciousness—'The Lord has become my child.' The *madhura rasa* is conjugal love. It is the feeling which the *gopis* are said to have felt for Krishna. Krishna's wives are also models of it, but the former are given precedence, for in their love for Krishna there was no tinge of constraint or legal obligation,—it was altogether free and spontaneous. They are therefore said to be the best models of this form of piety, one which is said to be the highest conceivable.

Here, then, we have in brief the Vaishnava ideal of *bhakti*. What I have to say about it is this. I fully admit that in real *bhakti* an intimate relationship is established between the worshipper and the worshipped. This relationship may have a super-

ficial likeness to a human relationship. I say superficial, for as no human soul can be so near as the Soul of our souls, or can have the perfections of the Infinite, the likeness between piety and human love cannot but be remote. However, admitting some likeness between the two, I have next to say, that piety, to be real piety, must be the result of a direct communion of the human soul with the Divine. No one can say what type of piety,—whether *sānta*, *dāśya*, *sahhya*, *vātsalya* or *madhura*—will be spontaneously developed in him unless he approaches the Lord directly and cultivates direct dealings with him. If he does not see him within and without through *jñāna*, but simply accepts him by blind faith, and taking as his models the old historical or mythical *bhaktas*, for instance the *gopas* and *gopis*, tries to feel towards him what they are said to have done, he really puts the cart before the horse. But, it is just this which the Vaishnava teachers on *bhakti* teach us to do. They disparage *jñāna*, regard *bhakti* with *jñāna* as lower than *bhakti* without *jñāna*,—see for instance Chaitanya's conversation with 'Rāmānanda Rāy in the *Chaitanya Charitāmṛita*—and commend the Brindāban-Līlā as an object of constant contemplation. This scheme of cultivating *bhakti* seems to me utterly misconceived. The idea that

God once incarnated himself in the way he is said to have done, and that he is not as near and manifest to us now as he was to those *bhaktas*, is itself one which produces a most disastrous effect on the religious life. It practically circumscribes God in a particular space and time, though theoretically acknowledging his infinitude. Then, to suppose that this mythical account of God's dealings with man is the image of an eternal heaven once for all manifested on earth, is to give a most injurious twist to the spiritual ideal. And lastly to make the mythical models of so called piety our exemplars and try to imitate them in our daily strivings after true piety, seems to be the very culmination of an utterly perverted process. But unless all this is done, I do not see in what other way we may follow the guidance of the Vāishnava leaders. So far as I know, they do not give, they rather highly object to giving, spiritual explanations of the stories they deal with. They do not teach us that the Lord deals with us, ordinary people, as lovingly and intimately as he is said to have done with their mythical models. If they did so, and if they tried to make God's constant dealings with man intelligible and credible, their ideal of *bhakti* would indeed be the highest conceivable. To realise the love of God in our domestic and social relations, and to be uplifted, enlightened, softened,



sweetened, and strengthened by such realisation,—what indeed can be a higher ideal of piety than all this? But I do not see that the Vaishnavas help us any way in realising such an ideal. They rather seem to me to cut the very roots of *bhakti* by disparaging *jñāna* and to throw impassable barriers between God and man by their mythical stories. Really nowhere is God more manifest than in our everyday lives and in our domestic and social relations, and in no age was he nearer to man than in the present. And in realising the truth of God's nearness to and direct dealings with us, no sacred literature seems to me more helpful than the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavadgītā*. If we study them, not merely with the help of their ancient commentaries, but also with that of the best commentaries on them available to us, namely, modern science, modern philosophy, the real history of man and the experiences of our own individual lives, and follow out, in our practical lives, the light thus acquired, there is every likelihood that the present-day models of piety will rather be grander and more glorious, and not the reverse, than those set forth in our ancient books. May the Lord help us all in loving him as we are loved!

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## CHAPTER IX

### The *Gita* Ideal of *Bhakti* compared with the Christian Ideal

In my first lecture I have denied all historical connection between the *Gita* and Christianity, and in what I am going to say in the present lecture, I do not mean to assert any such connection. Whatever evidence is found of the date when the *Gita* was composed, shows that at that time there could be no interchange of thought between those who held the views represented in the *Gita* and the followers of Jesus. That Indian thought had travelled into Syria when the founder of Christianity was born, that there were even brotherhoods similar to Buddhist *sanghas* in Palestine at the time Christianity arose, are well-known facts. That Christian thought came to India in a diluted form in the early Christian centuries through the Indo-Grecian states, seems also probable. But these facts fail to prove any close connection between the *Gita* and the Christian system. Nor does internal evidence—the study of the *Gita* and the *New Testament*—reveal any mutual borrowing on their parts. It is therefore not of past, but of present and future connection between the two systems,

that I mean to speak. The analogies that strike the student of both are proofs, not of historical connection, but of the harmony of all higher thought whenever and wherever attained. And the dissimilarities, it may be mentioned, are as striking as the similarities. They will be evident as we proceed. Before, however, I advance farther, I shall enter a word of protest against the indifference to the study of Christian thought affected in certain quarters. I say 'affected', for indifference, at any rate total indifference in the present case, is really impossible. The Christian conquest of India is not only external, but deeply internal. We are conquered, partially indeed, but surely so far, even in our thoughts and feelings, not to speak of our habits and manners. Indifference to Christian thought is therefore out of the question. We take it in, so to say, with the very air we breathe. It will not do to say now-a-days that our national scriptures, our national systems of thought and our national ideas and disciplines of the spiritual life are sufficient for us. I believe that if they were sufficient, Providence would not have brought them face to face with foreign systems. But I do not stop to prove my belief. Admitting for a moment that they are sufficient, I say it is impossible for us now to contemplate them as our fathers did. Our modes of thought have been

inevitably changed by the education we have received and by our contact with foreign systems. To ignore these systems being impossible, then, is it not wise to make the best of them,—to study them reverently and humbly learn from them what they have to teach us ?

One of the most striking analogies between the teachings of the *Gita* and those of the *New Testament* is that both speak in the name of a person who assumes divine authority and identifies himself,—each in his own way,—with the Supreme Being. The first question suggested by this analogy is whether both these persons, Krishna and Christ, are historical. As to the historicity of Krishna, we have devoted our first two lectures to the subject. We have seen in our first lecture that, to state the matter briefly, the Krishna of the *Mahābhārata* and the Puranas is not historical. In our second lecture we have seen that if all that these authorities say about Krishna be true, he is far from the divine character which is attributed to him in the *Gita*. The question now is whether Christ also is as mythical as Krishna and whether his character, as depicted in the Gospels, is as unworthy of imitation as Krishna's. Now, I am sorry that I have neither the time nor the power to answer the first question in the way I would otherwise have done. Even if I had the power

to do so, it would be going out of my way, in these lectures, to enter into the question of the historicity of the life of Jesus Christ as it is given in the Christian records. I can give only the result of my rather limited studies on the subject. \* That result is, that though much that is said about Jesus in the gospel narrative is not true, being really the outcome of the superstition and theological conceptions of the writers, the main outline of his life and teachings, as given in it, are historical. As to Christ's character, though we have only a faint picture of it in these records, even those who are without the least Christian bias seem to agree that it is an ideal character. John Stuart Mill says in effect in his *Three Essays on Religion*, that if we give up the idle hope of finding scientific exactness in Jesus, we see in him a true "ideal of excellence." I think this will be the verdict of all careful and unbiassed readers of the gospels. And it would matter little even if the life depicted in them were unhistorical. If it were fanciful,—a pious forgery—it would require, as Mill says, a Christ to forge Christ. So far as character-painting is concerned, then, the *Gita* and the *New Testament* stand on two very different footings. The *Gita*

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\* See *Renan's Histories of Christianity*, *Martineau's Seat of Authority in Religion*, and *Sunderland's Origin and Character of the Bible*.

paints no character, or, if it points to one by its lofty teachings, it is purely ideal, it being impossible to ascertain how far, if at all, it was realised in practice. On the other hand, the *New Testament* gives the outlines of a truly divine historical character, which, though not scientifically exact, and though leaving gaps which we would gladly see filled in, has yet guided millions of pious men and women for nineteen hundred years and is as much a light now as it was in the past.

However, there is still a third question that arises before we proceed to a comparison of the *Gita* and the Christian ideal of piety. We have seen that Krishna's claim to divinity in the *Gita* is founded on a philosophical doctrine—the Hindu doctrine of the Logos. Can this be said of the similar claim that Christ makes in the gospel? Has it any philosophy behind it? My answer is that though I find Jesus claiming a prenatal existence and unity with the Father and promising the same unity to all true disciples, I do not see in his utterances anything that can be called a philosophical doctrine. It is not indeed improbable that Jesus may have heard a good deal of philosophical talk with which his province of Galilee abounded in his days, either from the Greeks settled there or from those of his own race who combined in themselves the prophetic lore of their own country with

the philosophical learning of Greece. But his seems to have been a nature on which such influences could make but little impression. His consciousness of unity with the Father seems to have been of the nature of an intuition, one which had no patience to inquire into its logical bearings. I therefore do not find, as I do not seek, any philosophy, properly so called, in the utterances ascribed to Jesus. But very different is the case with his apostle, St. Paul. There is a philosophical system, however crude, in the writings ascribed to him. This system, uniting with the more methodical system of Greece, soon gave rise to a Christian philosophy even in the early centuries of the Christian era, and this philosophy has gone on growing through the ages that have succeeded till it now commands the assent of the most thoughtful and learned in the west. Our countrymen know little of all this, and therefore identify Christianity with ignorance and superstition. However, I am not going to deal here with Christian philosophy properly so called. I shall inquire only, in as brief a compass as possible, into the Christian idea of God and our duty to him as it is set forth in the teachings of Jesus and in the epistles ascribed to the apostles.

Though Jesus has no philosophical conception of the relation of God to man and Nature, and

does not prescribe *sādhana*s like the '*dhyāna-yoga*' and *visvarūpadarsana* of the *Gītā*, he seems to have a deep faith in the presence of God within and without us. He indeed believes in a local heaven, where the presence of God shines more brightly than on earth, but he also believes that God is ever-active in Nature and in the soul of man. His conception of the love of God for man, for every man individually, is striking, and will ever draw men's hearts to his teachings, whatever progress they may make in science and philosophy. I must quote some of his sayings on the subject,—sayings containing in simple language the deepest wisdom that any philosophy can teach. In Matthew, chapter vi (revised version) he says : "Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat and what ye shall drink ; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment ? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; and your heavenly father feedeth them. Are ye not of much more value than they ? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature ? And why are ye anxious about raiment ? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin : yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like



one of these. ' But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is but to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith ?' (25-30.) In chapter x he says : "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father : but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore ; ye are of more value than many sparrows." (29-31.)

Of the many parables of Jesus, I quote only two as showing most clearly his idea of the tender love of God for man's salvation. The first is the parable of the Lost Sheep, and the second that of the Prodigal Son. I take both from Luke, chapter xv : "And he spoke unto them this parable, saying, What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it ? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and his neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, which need no repentance." (3-7.)

Then comes the Parable of the Prodigal Son :

“And he said, A certain man had two sons : and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country ; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country ; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country ; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have been filled with the husks that the swine did eat : and no man gave unto him. But when he came unto himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here, with hunger ! I will rise and go to my father, and I will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight : I am no more worthy to be called thy son : make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father. And while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight : I am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly

the best robe and put it on him ; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet ; and bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and make merry : for this my son was dead, and is alive again ; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field ; and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called to him one of the servants, and inquired what these things might be. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come ; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. But he was angry and would not go in : and his father came out and intreated him. But he answered and said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, and I never transgressed a commandment of thine ; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends : but when this thy son came, which has devoured thy living with harlots, thou killedst for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine. But it was meet to make merry and be glad : for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again ; and was lost, and is found."

( 11—32. )

So, it is on a foundation of stone, namely that God loves every man with an infinite love and is

our common Father, that Jesus builds his twofold law of love to God and love to man. This cannot be said of systems which only vaguely feel after an impersonal substance at the basis of all life, and an impersonal law of *karma* holding all in an iron grip. Nor can it be credited to theories which, though teaching the personality of God, conceive him as absorbed in his own enjoyment and holding no parental relations with man. Such systems try in vain to make piety the guiding principle of life, and talk unmeaningly of the brotherhood of man—a brotherhood without a common Father. No system is less liable to this self-condemnation than Christianity. Now, the Christian commandments to love God and love man are so conjoined, that they may be regarded as one. To love God is to do his will, and to do his will is to be just and loving to man both inwardly and outwardly. This eminently practical ideal of piety issues into a system of ethics which is grand not only on its ideal side, but also in the deep and wide philanthropy it has called forth. Christian piety, as it finds expression in the Bible and in the lives of the generality of its followers, shows little or nothing of that meditative height and that emotional depth which characterise Hindu piety. But its ethical depth and fervour is most striking, and forms its real and abiding greatness. And the most im-

portant feature of this aspect of Christianity is that the love of man inculcated by it is not a mere precept, but a living example,—the life of its Founder. The “enthusiasm of humanity”—a consuming love of man as the son of God—is the guiding passion and principle of that life, and the lessons taught all find their fulfilment and realisation in it. However, it would be out of place here for me to give the details of Christ’s law of love to man. The establishment of the kingdom of heaven on earth seems to sum up this law, and this idea clearly marks out Christian endeavours from those of other religions and explains the intense missionary and philanthropic activity of the followers of Christ. While all other religions look up to a supra-mundane heaven—conceived either as a locality or a spiritual condition—as their goal, Christianity looks forward to the earth itself as the place where the kingdom of heaven is to be established. The details of the idea may be criticised, but the fundamental idea itself is grand and supremely true. There may be heavenlier and more abiding spheres of existence than this earth, but so long as it lasts, there can be nothing nobler for man than the endeavour to make it heavenly. As we shall see gradually, the *Gita* recognizes this principle, but does not put the proper emphasis on it. However, the spirit in which man, even

as regards his physical wants, is to be served, is brought out very clearly in the Gospel account of the last judgment. In this it is made evident that even the least of men is to be served as identified with Christ, the Son of God. This idea, notwithstanding the mythical and poetic imagery in which it is clothed, is so true and grand, that I extract at length the description which contains it. I quote from Mathew: "When the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him saying Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or a thirsty, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in or naked, and clothed thee? And

the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, In as much as ye did it unto one of these, my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels : for I was an hungred and ye gave me no meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink. I was a stranger, and ye took me not in ; naked, and ye clothed me not : sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or a thirsty, or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister unto thee ? Then shall he answer them saying, Verily I say unto, you, In as much as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into eternal punishment : but the righteous into eternal life." (Matt. xxv. 31-46).

The unity of God and man is here grasped in a very practical manner, however little it may have been understood philosophically. If a choice had to be made between the mere intellectual recognition of this unity, leading only to devotional exercises, characterised by emotional ecstasies, and this practical acceptance of it, which has changed the face of the earth so much for the better, there would be no doubt about the choice. But we are

really called upon, not to make a choice, but to combine the two and set up as our models both our own *jñānis* and *bhaktas* on the one hand, and Jesus and his followers on the other. However, a word is perhaps necessary about the "eternal punishment," of sinners of which Jesus speaks. Christendom itself is outgrowing the idea, and it is being seen more and more clearly as the world grows, that however far man may go from God, he cannot altogether shake off the divinity inherent in him. Everyone is "doomed to be saved," as everyone is and ever remains a child of God. The idea of justice—satisfying eternal justice by eternal punishment—which led the ancients, and leads even many moderns, to entertain the doctrine, has something radically wrong in it. It would be out of place, however, to discuss the point here. I shall only point out, that our scriptures, and the *Gītā* among them, are not quite free from this doctrine. Unrepenting sinners,—persistent rebels against God—are spoken of in almost the same language as Jesus uses by Krishna in the sixteenth chapter of the *Gītā*. Having spoken of two classes of men, those born with *daivī sampat*, divine qualities, and those with *āsuri sampat*, devilish qualities, very much in the same way as Jesus speaks of sheep and goats, Krishna says of the latter :



नानहं दिषतः क्रूरान् संसारेषु नराधमान् ।

क्षिपाम्यजस्रमशुभान् आसुरीष्वेव योनिषु ॥

आसुरीं योनिमापन्ना मृदा जन्मनि जन्मनि ।

मामप्राप्यैव कौन्तेय ततो यान्त्रधमां गतिम् ॥ (19-20)

“These enemies, ferocious, meanest of men, and unholy, I continually hurl down into worlds, into devilish wombs. Coming into devilish wombs, deluded in every birth, and not coming to me, they go down to the vilest state, O son of Kunti.”

However, let us now come to the teachings of St. Paul. As I have already said, there is a system, however crude, in them. His theology, though fundamentally Hebraic, is greatly modified by his Greek learning. Of this, we find the first proof in his speech in the Areopagus or Hill of Mars at Athens. He seems to have a deep sense of the immanence of God. His words “In Him we live, and move and have our being” (Acts, xvii. 28.) indicate this sense, and have scarcely any parallel in the teachings of other writers of the *New Testament*. In Corinthians, iii. 16, he says : “Know ye not that ye (that is, the Christian community) are a temple of God and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy ; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” In Ephesians, chapter iv, he says, “There is one

body and one spirit, even as also ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all." (4-7) His 'Christ' is not a mere individual, but "is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist." (Colossians, i. 15-17.) But nevertheless St. Paul's Hebraism comes out in the sharp line that he draws between 'the flesh' and 'the spirit.' 'The flesh' or man's animal nature is credited with his sins and tendency to sin. From Adam downwards, all have become hopelessly sinful and subject to the Divine condemnation, so much so, that no *work* they can do, however holy, can bring about their salvation. It is only the death of the sinless Son of God for our sins that can atone for them. And this share in Christ's atonement can be secured only by faith. What St. Paul means by this *faith*, which he sharply contrasts with *works*, it is indeed very different to ascertain. No less difficult is the due understanding of the apostle's distinction, already referred to, between 'the flesh' and the 'spirit.' Many things

which the apostle ascribes to the former, would now be attributed to the latter. But we, Hindus, who are familiar with the distinctions of the false and the true self, and of *jñāna* and *karma*, in our scriptures, of the endless controversies between the one-sided followers of both, and of their attempted harmony in the *Gītā*, can perhaps catch the apostle's meaning more easily than most westerners. Taken literally, St. Paul's sharp distinction between 'the flesh' and 'the spirit,' the one leading to sin and death and the other to holiness and life, is indeed inadmissible. And his doctrine that the death—bodily death—of a sinless person atones for the sins of his brethren, and saves them from death—spiritual death—is inconsistent, if not morally outrageous, on the face of it, if taken in a literal sense. But on the other hand, it is difficult to believe that St. Paul did not see the inconsistencies involved in his doctrine, and that he taught it in nothing but a literal sense. That there is a deep inner meaning in his teachings, one which he perhaps had not the power to make quite clear, will be evident to all who study his epistles in the light of their deeper spiritual experiences. Man's animal nature is not indeed radically sinful, but when he comes in sight of his higher, spiritual nature, and feels its demands, a severe conflict between the two is inevitable until the

former has come perfectly under the latter's control. It is this conflict which the apostle depicts in words that seem to contradict one another in his epistles, specially in his epistle to the Romans. Christ's death on the cross typifies, to the apostle, the death of 'the flesh', that is, the complete subjugation of our animal nature—our false, lower self—to the higher. The Crucifixion is not to him a mere historical event. It must be spiritually repeated in the life of every true believer—repeated not as an event, but as process—a process which gradually grows into consummation. Similarly, the Resurrection typifies the birth of the higher life, the life of the spirit,—life in union with God. Crucifixion and Resurrection correspond to the *Gita's* *Brahmanirvān* and *Brahmasamsthā*. So, 'faith' and 'work' correspond to *jñāna* and *karma*. St. Paul does not condemn work any more than Krishna condemns *karma*. The one inculcates good work as much as the other. But to neither are they the direct means of salvation. According to St. Paul, the direct and only way to salvation is faith, with which love is inseparable, and according to Krishna it is *jñāna*, which is inseparable from *bhakti*. And both mean the same thing. Faith, like *jñāna*, is the consciousness of unity with God, or in other words, with Christ, who, to St. Paul,

is one with God. It is the consciousness that our true self is not our animal nature, with its desires, satisfactions and sufferings, but the Spirit of God in us, and that our salvation, our perfect sanctification, is eternally accomplished in him and does not depend upon any particular action on our part. Unless this is seen, no work availeth. All work without true faith is tainted by egotism—by the false consciousness that I, an independent agent, am its doer. Such work, therefore, however holy on a superficial view, cannot bring about true salvation. The utter helplessness of man without God's power must be felt before salvation is possible. It must be felt that God's grace alone, and not anything that man can do, brings redemption. And when it comes, it is seen that it is through and through Divine, that the old sinful self is entirely dead and a new self,—the Spirit of God himself—has taken its place. This truth the apostle expresses in the following among other passages of a similar import in his epistles : "I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ, yet I live ; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me : and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me." (*Galatians, ii. 20.*) The apostle's language as well

as ideas are so closely associated with the peculiar history and mythology of his country, and the method by which he arrived at the highest truths seems to be so different from ours, that it is very difficult to see that he teaches a scheme of salvation similar to that taught in the *Gita*. Specially, the word 'faith' has, by common usage, become so closely associated with blind, uncritical belief, and the apostle himself so often seems to confuse it with such belief, that it sometimes becomes almost incredible that to him it ultimately means the same thing as our *jnāna*. But a close study of his writings leaves no doubt in an unbiassed mind that though his experiences are veiled under a mythological and traditional garb, a vision of God in the soul had really delivered him from the bondage of the law—of *vidhi* or *sruti*, as we call it. As he himself says : "Before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor. For ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free (i. e. slaves nor free citizens), there can be

no male and female : for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus. (*Galatians*, iii. 23-28.)

Paul, like his master, is a great teacher of love both by precept and example. As I have already said, his 'faith' is inseparable from 'love,' as the *Gītā's jñāna* is inseparable from *bhakti*. He teaches it everywhere in his writings. But his most oft-quoted teaching on the subject is I Corinthians, chapter xiii, which I extract in full : "If I speak with the tongues of man and angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge ; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind ; love envieth not ; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil : rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth ; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things— Love never faileth." (1-8.)

Of the other apostles whose epistles form parts of the *New Testament*, the most striking, as regards his teachings, is St. John. He too is a great teacher

of love, and his teachings on the subject are among the most oft-quoted passages of the book. I extract here those portions of his writings which bear directly on love : "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes." (I. John, ii. 9-11). "Beloved, let us love one another : for love is of God ; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God ; for God is love." (IV. 7,8). "There is no fear in love : but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear has punishment, and he that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar : for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." (18-21.)

Now, this great teacher of love is supposed, and with good reason, to be the writer of the fourth gospel, the chief receptacle, among all Christian scriptures, of the doctrine of the Logos. This brings the gospel much



nearer the spirit of the *Gita* than any other of these writings. I extracted its introduction in my third lecture, but had no time to expound it. A proper exposition of it here would be out of place, even if I had the power to give one. But I feel called upon to say something on the subject. The doctrine of the Logos is pre-Christian, but became a part of the religion in the early Christian centuries. It is Greek in origin, and perhaps the Greeks borrowed it from us through the Buddhist missionaries. The form in which it was introduced into Christianity is due to the teachings of Philo, an Alexandrian Jew, and a contemporary of Jesus. He combined in himself, in a most remarkable manner, the learning of his own race and that of the Greeks. And there was nothing strange in the combination. The idea of the Son of God, the Anointed, the Messiah, was already in the Hebrew scriptures. Philo gave it a philosophical shape with the help of his Platonic learning. Those who are familiar with the Vedantic distinctions of the *Nirguna* and the *Saguna* Brahman, of the *Īkārana* and the *Kārya* Brahman, will find no difficulty in understanding that of God and the Word, of the Father and the Son. The Father is the primal, indescribable Essence, beyond time, space, and the limitations imposed by them. The Son is the idea of the world of

time and space existing eternally in the Father. The created world is the actual manifestation of the Son. In Vedantic phraseology, the Father is the Para Brahma, the Son as eternally in the Father is Isvara, and the Son as manifested in or as the world is Brahmá. All things and beings are parts of the Son, and through him of the Father. The Father creates, that is, gives forth or manifests, the world through the Son. So far Philo and pre-Christian Neo-Platonism. Then comes John, the author of the fourth gospel. The general manifestation of the Son in the world was not enough for its salvation. Some knew him, and became sons of God ; but many more remained ignorant and came under the power of evil. It therefore became necessary for the Word to "become flesh," that is, to become incarnate as a man. And that man is Jesus Christ. Now, I hope that in the light of this explanation, the extract I gave from the gospel of John in my third lecture will become intelligible. With your permission I again quote from it, with short expositions of the extracts. It says : "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." 'The Word' stands for the Greek *logos* and corresponds to our *śabda*. As our *śabda* has both a rational and a sensuous aspect, so has *logos*

or speech. As *śabda* is both eternal and non-eternal, uncreate and create—eternal as thought or idea and non-eternal as sound, so is *logos*, 'word.' An exposition of the Hindu theory of ideas, of *śabda* as *apauruṣeya*, uncreated, so much like the Platonic theory, will be found in the second lecture of my *Vedānta and its Relation to Modern Thought*. However, up to what I have extracted from John, the Word is yet unmanifested, it has not become the world. Then comes creation, creation by the Word, that is, according to the archetypal ideas eternally existing in God. "All things," says John, "were made by him ; and without him was not anything made that hath been made." That the understanding of ordinary men is a faint reproduction of the Word, a reproduction too dull to apprehend the original, is said next : "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness ; and the darkness apprehended it not." At this point, the Evangelist begins, somewhat abruptly, to speak of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus. I say abruptly, or rather prematurely, for he has not yet done speaking of the state of the world before the advent of Jesus. Perhaps it is to show the purpose of this advent, of the darkness and indifference which made it necessary, that he speaks of John as heralding

it. He says: "There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light." Then the Evangelist resumes his description of 'the light' as it was manifested before Jesus: "There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world. He was in the world (that is, before the birth of Jesus), and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The two classes of men just spoken of correspond to the two described at length in the sixteenth chapter of the *Gītā*, that on *Daivāsura-sampatti-vibhāga*, the distinction of god-like and devilish qualities. However, now comes the incarnation of the Logos in Jesus. "The Word," says John, "became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth." Here, then, in substance, is the Christian doctrine of the Logos. I have given some exposition

of it, but I feel that I am far from understanding it fully. There are many things in it which I do not understand, though, merely because I do not understand them, I do not reject them as so much nonsense in the supercilious way in which many non-Christian Theists and Unitarian Christians do so. I think I understand in what sense Jesus says, 'I and my Father are one' (John, x. 30). It is not merely in the sense of unity of will, but also in the sense of a unity of substance. And those who feel this unity of substance with the Father will also see how absurd is the idea of birth or origination as applied to the soul. The soul is not born, but "begotten." But if every soul is "begotten of the Father", and if, as John says in his epistle, 'every one that loveth is begotten of God,' (John, iv. 7) I do not see in what sense Jesus is called "the only begotten son" of God. As to his pre-natal existence, and the knowledge and power beyond those of other persons claimed by him or for him in his name, I see nothing unreasonable in them. To try to bring all beings to our own level is not true wisdom, but rather blind and presumptuous ignorance of the power of God and of the potentiality of those who share in the Divine essence. I must not, however, forget that with all the claims Jesus makes to Divine rights and powers, he says clearly, "The Father is

greater than I" ( John, xiv. 28 ) and disclaims both omniscience and omnipotence. It must also be remembered that the Divine sonship and unity with the Father claimed by Jesus are not incommunicable attributes, but that they are attainable by, or to speak more correctly, realisable as the birth-right of, every rational being. In the long prayer which John ascribes to Jesus in his seventeenth chapter, he prays : "Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are ... Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word ; that they may all be one ; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that the world may believe that thou didst send me. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them, that they may be one, even as we are one ; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one ; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me."

We thus see how very similar the Christian doctrine of the Logos and his incarnation is to the *Gita* doctrine on the same subject in spite of its defective expression in the Christian scriptures and at the hands of many Christian missionaries. What I think of the philosophy underlying it, you must have gathered from my sixth and seventh

lectures, those on the relation of the *Gita* to the Vedanta Philosophy and the *Gita* and western ideals of knowledge. The distinctions of God and his Word, and of the Word itself as manifested and unmanifested, and the corresponding distinctions of *Nirguna* and *Saguna* Brahman, of *Karana* and *Karya* Brahman, in our own sacred books, may be necessary; but it must never be forgotten that these distinctions imply an underlying unity. To say that the Father or the *Nirguna* cannot manifest himself in time and space, and that hence it falls to the Word to do so, is to indulge in mere abstract thought, for time, space and limitations are unthinkable without relation to the Timeless, the Spaceless, the Unlimited. On the other hand, to speak of a Father, a Being of infinite love and holiness, without not merely one son, but a whole family of spiritual beings sharing and responding to his love, and of a mere scheme of ideas without manifestation, is also so much abstract thinking. Similarly, to say that the Son only, and not the Father, became or becomes incarnate, is also due to the same way of thinking. If the Father and the Son are inseparable, how can the Son come anywhere without the Father? In every rational being the Father and the Son, the Infinite and the Finite, both become incarnate, that is, manifested. Nor could the Holy Ghost, the regenerating power of God,

who makes the Son conscious of the Father in him and enables him to surrender himself to him, tarry until the day of Pentecost, as the fourth gospel poetically represents him as having done. His presence may long be unfelt, unrecognised. But even in those who are unconscious of him, he is present and active, just as nutrition and intellectual growth go on in the infant unconscious of them. No child of God is mere flesh. What we call mere sensuous or intellectual functions in us are not merely so. They all tend to the growth of the spiritual life. Nevertheless there is a real Pentecost in every man's life, when the working of the Holy Spirit within is vividly realised. And this happens just when John says it does, that is, when more or less external props like a great personality or a great book fail us. However, we see that the Christian doctrine of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost as three in one and one in three, is not quite an impenetrable mystery. It is a mystery, no doubt. All deeper truths of religion are mysteries: we understand them only in part, not in full. But the Trinity is not a greater mystery than Monotheism, at any rate the grand Monotheism of our *rishis* which says of God,

एको ब्रह्मै सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा

एकं रूपं बहुधा यः करोति ।



तमात्मस्य वेऽनुपश्यन्ति भीरा-

स्तेषां सुखं शाश्वतं नेतरेषाम् ॥

“The one Ruler, the Inner Self of all creatures, who makes his one form manifold—those wise men who perceive him in themselves obtain everlasting happiness, and not others.” (*Kathopanishad*, ii.2.12). We thus see that the essence of Christian teaching is in harmony with the fundamental teachings of our own sacred books, and that Christianity, inspite of the outlandish dress which so often hides its true character from us, has come to us, not as an alien, but as a near kindred, always ready to help us, and as such deserves our hearty reception.

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## LECTURE X

### The *Gita* Doctrine of *Karma* or Work

The *Gita* teaching on *karma* or work is the most characteristic teaching of the book and is perhaps the one which is most valued by its admirers, among whom, as you must have already seen, I have the honour to be one. If, in my exposition of the philosophy of the *Gita*, I had followed the order of its chapters, I should have treated of *karma* before treating of *jñāna* and *bhakti*, for, as I told you in my fourth lecture, the *karma-shatka* of the *Gita*,—the six chapters treating of *karma*,—is the first of its three *shatkas*. But as I find that its doctrine of *karma* is based on its doctrine of *jñāna* and *bhakti*, and to be properly understood, requires a knowledge of the latter two, I have dealt with them before taking up the former. As I already told you in the lecture referred to, the division of chapters in the *Gita* is not quite logical, and in addition to what is said on *karma* in the first *shatka*, the subject is largely dealt with in the eighteenth or final chapter. It is indeed obvious that a thing must be known and felt to be attractive before any attempt is made to possess it. In other words, there must be *jñāna* and *bhakti*, the latter in the form of admiration

or liking, at any rate, for a thing before there can be any *karma* about it. A flower, for instance, must be seen or smelt and liked before one stretches out one's hand to pluck or possess it. Nevertheless the *Gītā* order of *karma*, *bhakti* and *jñāna* has a reason behind it. Knowledge, specially the knowledge of God, in its higher form, in the form of direct realisation, and even in the form of reasoned conviction, comes later in life, and before it a good deal of *karma* and *bhakti*, work and worship, is gone through and must be gone through. There must indeed be some notion of God or gods before we have any feeling for him or them and before we do anything to please them. But such a notion may be only instinctive or derived from tradition, and may not amount to knowledge in the real sense. In fact people believe and feel long before they begin to *know*, and this order of progress is not only the usual one, but is the one prescribed and defended in our *sāstras*, and, it seems, in all *sāstras*. It is only when a revolution takes place in spiritual life, when belief in the authority of *sāstras* is destroyed, when nothing but direct knowledge suffices, when feelings not based on such knowledge seem to be nothing better than superstition, and all higher activities wait for the compass and rudder of clear ideas justified by reason, that the order of progress is

changed, and instead of *karma*, *bhakti* and *jñāna*, we have *jñāna*, *bhakti* and *karma*.

So far, however, there is no conflict between the three, but only a difference of order. But it is of a conflict that the *Gītā* speaks, at any rate, gives an indication. In the very second chapter of the book, Krishna, in trying to cure Arjuna of his depression and induce him to fight, praises *karma* and appeals to his instincts as a warrior and prince, and when he sees that his pupil is deaf to these appeals, sets before him the ideals of *buddhi-yoga*, *karma-yoga* and *samādhi*,—ideals of a spiritual condition from which he might act—might do apparently the most fearful things—and yet incur no sin and bondage, things that Arjuna feared most. And again, as against those to whom such ideals had no meaning, Krishna has some very pinching things to say. Now, Arjuna, here, with his supposed objections to *karma* and doubts about *yoga* and *samādhi*, is only a name standing for large classes of thinkers against whom the author of the *Gītā* wages a long crusade not only here, but throughout his book. The opponents of *yoga* and *samādhi* are chronologically the first of the two classes of enemies referred to, the opponents of *karma* coming later. As in matters metaphysical we have seen the author of the *Gītā* attempting to effect a

harmony between the Sankhya and Védanta philosophies, so in ethics he seeks to strike a mean between the extreme views of the sensationist hedonists on the one hand, and those of the idealistic ascetics on the other. The former are the followers of the *karma-kāṇḍa* of the Vedas, and the latter the extreme followers of the *jñānakāṇḍa*. In later times they came to be known as the followers of Jaimini and Bādarāyana respectively; but their differences preceded their being grouped into distinct philosophical schools and their tenets being embodied in regular bodies of aphorisms. The claims of *karma* in the form of Vedic sacrifices and ceremonies were first formulated in the *Brāhmanas*, which must have been composed centuries before the formation of distinct philosophical schools. The very formulation of these claims shows that there were men who opposed them; and who could these men be but those whose thoughts find expression in the *Upanishads*? As the latter advanced in their knowledge of the Supreme Being, whom no sacrifices can please, and of our duties to him, which are spiritual, and not ceremonial, they began to see more and more clearly the futility of sacrifices, and some of them taught their total abandonment and an exclusive devotion to the culture of *jñāna*. On the other hand, the extreme defenders of

*karma* saw nothing higher than these rites and ceremonies. But there was a third party who saw the good of both *jñāna* and *karma*, and tried to combine the two. They were called, or came latterly to be called, *samuchchaya-vādis*, advocates of harmony, the harmony of *jñāna* and *karma*. In the *Isopanishad*, which is attached to the *Samhitā* of the *Sukla Yajurveda*, we find perhaps one of the earliest statements of *Samuchchaya-vāda*. It is contained in the following verses, which, though apparently obscure, can bear, I think, only the meaning I attach to them if interpreted without bias. They are :—

अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽविद्यामुपासते ।  
 ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ विद्यायां रताः ॥  
 अन्यदेवाहुर्विद्यान्यदाहुर्विद्यया ।  
 इति शृणुम धीराणां ये नस्तद्विचचक्षिरे ॥  
 विद्याञ्चाविद्याञ्च यस्तद्वेदोभयं सह ।  
 अविद्यया मृत्युं तौत्वां विद्ययामृतमश्नुते ॥  
 अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽसम्भूतिमुपासते ।  
 ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ सम्भूत्यां रताः ॥  
 अन्यदेवाहुः सम्भवादन्यदाहुःसम्भवात् ।  
 इति शृणुम धीराणां ये नस्तद्विचचक्षिरे ॥  
 सम्भूतिञ्च विनाशञ्च यस्तद्वेदोभयं सह ।  
 विनाशेन मृत्युं तौत्वां सम्भूत्यामृतमश्नुते ॥

I translate them as follows in my Devanagari and

English edition of the *Upanishads* :—"Those who worship not-knowledge, enter into blinding darkness ; those who are attached to knowledge, enter into still greater darkness. They say that one thing results from knowledge and another from not-knowledge. This we have heard from the wise-men who taught us about that. He who knows knowledge and not-knowledge at the same time, overcomes death through not-knowledge, and attains immortality through knowledge. Those who worship the Not-cause, enter into blinding darkness. Those who are attached to the Cause, enter into still greater darkness. They say that one thing results from the Cause and another from the Not-cause. This we have heard from the wisemen who taught us about that. He who knows the Cause and Destruction ( *i. e.* The Not-cause or Nature ) at the same time, overcomes death through Destruction and obtains immortality through the Cause." The real import of these verses will be better understood from the following note which I have appended to my translation of the Upanishad, and which I quote with your permission. It runs as follows: "Verses 9-14 of the Upanishad dispose of the vexed question of the relation of *jñāna* and *karma*, knowledge and work. The author is evidently a *Samuchchaya-vādi*, an advocate of the harmony of knowledge

and work, though Sankara does not think so. There seems to have been, from a very early age, a class of thinkers or devotees who were for giving up duties, both sacrificial and social, as soon as they attained to a knowledge of Brahman. They thought that *vidyā* and *avidyā*, knowledge and not-knowledge or work, could not be harmonised, that devotion to the Cause, *i.e.*, to Brahman, excluded all devotion to the Not-cause, *i.e.* Nature,—that a life of deep contemplation was not compatible with active life, a life in close contact with the material world. The author of the *Isopanishad* seems to think that both these aspects of life,—the contemplative and the practical—are equally necessary for human perfection, and should receive equal attention. By devoting ourselves to practical duties, we avoid what the author describes as death, *i.e.*, that merely instinctive or animal life which man lives before he is awakened to a sense of duty ; while by the contemplation and worship of God we rise to that higher spiritual life which the author aptly describes as *amritam*, immortality. Following only one of these disciplines to the exclusion of the other is apt to generate spiritual blindness, *andham tamah*, and the author is scarcely wrong in thinking that the blindness produced by an exclusive spirituality is a deeper blindness



than what is caused by an exclusive ceremonialism. Sankara, however, explains *vidyā* to be only the knowledge of the gods, and not that of Brahman." I may add that as an extreme advocate of *jñāna*, he cannot bear to hear of *vidyā* leading to "ततो भूय इव तमः" "still greater darkness" than that to which *avidyā* or *karma* leads, and thus explains away the *vidyā* of the text as *aparā vidyā*, mere knowledge of the gods,—a quite unwarranted interpretation. However, notwithstanding the efforts of the *Samuchchayavādis*, the conflict thickened till at last the extreme followers of *jñāna* moved away from the Vedic lines altogether and formed themselves into the school of the Sankhyas. As we have seen in our fourth lecture, their connection with the Vedas is only nominal. They are great haters of Vedic rites and ceremonies and teach the utter abandonment of *karma* of every kind. We have seen how the Buddhists, the Sankarite Vedantists, and in fact all schools of ancient Indian thought, have been influenced by them. The secret of this deep influence is the logical force of the Sankhya speculation. Its opposition to *karma* is most consistent, as you must already have seen, from our fourth lecture. The Dualism of Prakriti and Purusha, and the idea that connection with Prakriti is the cause of bondage and the severance of this connection constitutes liberation, cannot but lead to

the doctrine that the utter abandonment of *karma* is necessary for liberation.' In so far as the *Gita* rejects the Sankhya Dualism, it succeeds in its attempt to harmonise *jñāna* and *karma* ; in so far as it fails to shake off its Sankhya predilections fully, its attempt in this direction fails too. We have seen something of this success and this failure. We must now look into them more closely.

In his second chapter, to which I have already referred, the author of the *Gita* at first represents Krishna as appealing to his pupil's worldly and other-worldly motives in inducing him to fight. Krishna is represented as saying :

स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।  
धर्म्यादि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत् क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥  
यदृच्छ्या चापपन्नं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम् ।  
सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्धमिदृशम् ॥  
अथ चेत् त्वमिमं धर्म्यं संग्रामं न करिष्यसि ।  
ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्त्तिं च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥  
अकीर्त्तिं चापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययम् ।  
सद्भावितस्य चाकीर्त्तिर्मरणादतिरिच्यते ॥  
भयाद्गणादुपरतं संस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।  
येषां च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥  
अवाच्यवादांश्च बहून् वदिष्यन्ति तवाहिताः ।  
निन्दन्तस्त्वव सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखतरं नु किम् ॥  
हृतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महौम ।  
तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कोन्ते य युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥

That is, "Having regard to thy own duty also, thou oughtst not to waver, for, to a Kshatriya, nothing is a greater good than a righteous war. Happy are those Kshatriyas, O son of Prithá, who find a battle like this, coming unsought as an open door to heaven. If, now, thou dost not fight this righteous fight, thou wilt incur sin by abandoning both thy duty and fame. And people will always speak of thy ill fame. To one who has gained honour, ill fame is worse than death. The great warriors will think thou hast withdrawn from the battle through fear, and thou wilt be lowered in the estimation of those who have hitherto held thee in great respect. And thy enemies, disparaging thy valour, will say many abusive words. What can be more painful than that? If thou art killed, thou wilt go to heaven; if thou art victorious, thou wilt enjoy the earth. Therefore, get up, O son of Kuntí, determined to fight." (31-37.)

But these appeals must prove unavailing to one who has become indifferent to earthly power and honour and to the enjoyment of happiness in a heaven conceived only as an extension, in a more pleasant form, of the earthly condition. Krishna therefore appeals to higher motives on the part of his pupil. He speaks of higher ideals of life—of *sāṅkhya-yoga* and *karma-yoga*, the chief subject matters of the *Gītā* teaching. But

before he fully states the nature of these ideals and speaks of the means of realising them, he wants his pupil to have a firm faith in them and an unwavering determination to pursue them. He knows how hard it is to have this firm faith and determination for those who listen to the flowery promises of the Vedas—of its ceremonial portions—promises of worldly and other-worldly happiness to those who perform the Vedic rites and ceremonies. Hence he tries to wean away Arjuna from such attractions. He says :

यामिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः ।

वेदादरताः पार्थ नान्यदस्तीतिवादिनः ॥

कामात्मानः स्वर्गपरा जन्मकर्मफलप्रदाम् ।

क्रियाविशेषवद्भूतां भोगैश्वर्यगतिं प्रति ॥

भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयापहृतचेतसाम् ।

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ॥

त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवाञ्जुन ।

निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥

“O son of Pritha, flowery words are spoken by the unwise—those who, are devoted to the teachings of the Vedas, who think there is nothing else (beyond what these teachings point to), who are full of desires and whose goal is heaven. These words promise birth as the fruit of actions and prescribe a multitude of particular acts for the attainment of pleasure and power. People who are attached

to pleasure and power, and whose minds are attracted by these flowery words, cannot have a firm faith in *samādhi*. The Vedas treat of things composed of the three *gunas*, but be free, O Arjuna, from these, free from the opposites or conflicts (caused by them), ever established in thy true nature, free from the cares of acquisition and preservation, and self-possessed." (42-46)

Again,

यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।

तदा गन्तासि निर्वदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ॥

श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।

समाधावचला बुद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ॥

That is, "When thy intellect will come out of the forest of delusion, thou wilt become indifferent to what is to be heard and what has been heard (that is, the teachings of the Vedas referred to). When thy mind, now distracted by the *sruti*, will be firmly fixed on *samādhi*, thou wilt attain *yoga*."

(52-53)

With such premonitory exhortations to keep his determination fixed amidst the distractions offered by Vedic teaching itself, Krishna proceeds to a more precise definition of the *yoga* state, and to prescribe disciplines for its attainment. We have partly seen what this state is in our fifth lecture, that on the *Yoga* philosophy. We have seen its

intellectual and contemplative aspects. What we are here chiefly concerned with, is its practical aspect—what it is as an ideal of life, as a rule for regulating our desires, purposes and actions. As such, it is, as we have already seen, a wholly negative state to our Sankhya and Yoga philosophers. It is the cessation of all desires, all purposes and all actions. A careful study of the *Gītā* leads one to the conclusion, that to its author also, it is very much the same. In this matter he is strongly swayed by his admiration for the Sankhya Philosophy. *Yoga* being the establishment of the soul in its own true nature, and the true nature of the soul being essentially inactive, above action, both according to the Sankhya Philosophy and the author of the *Gītā*, the *yoga* state is opposed to all forms of activity, internal and external. Activity belongs properly to Prakriti and not to Purusha. If a Purusha thinks that he is active, he is under an illusion, and as such under Prakriti's bondage. A fully enlightened Purusha, one who is conscious of his unity with the Supreme Purusha, knows that he is not active, that it is Prakriti, and not he, that acts. The Supreme Purusha himself knows that he is not active, that activity is due to Prakriti or *Svabhāva*; and if *Saabhāva* means illusion, as Sankara explains it, activity—all action or change—is illusory.

If so, what does the *Gītā* mean by speaking so much of *karma*? Why does Krishna exhort his pupil at every turn to act—to perform faithfully all sacrificial and social duties? What have these duties to do with the state of final liberation? Is a liberated man bound to do these duties? The answer, briefly stated, is this: The state of liberation has essentially nothing to do with action. A liberated man is not bound to do any action; he has no duties, no obligations. But liberation depends upon the purity of the heart, and the attainment of purity requires action. Hence the unliberated man is under an obligation to act; *he* has duties, but a liberated man has none. Nevertheless the latter ought to act in order to set an example to the former. If the unliberated, following the liberated, cease to act, they will remain in bondage, and the liberated will be responsible for it. Now, you see already that this doctrine involves a contradiction. If a liberated man is bound to act for the good of others, though not for his own good, action is essentially involved in liberation and it cannot be said that the liberated man has no duties, that in case he ceases from all duties, he incurs no sin and his liberation remains complete. I do not know how to exonerate the author of the *Gītā* from this self-contradiction. But as in other cases, so in

this, he practically rises above this contradiction. He in fact believes in an ever-active God, and he wishes all followers of God, all who would be God-like, to be ever-active; and yet he does not know how to reconcile this teaching of his with his Sankhya pre-conceptions and predilections. Hence the contradictions I refer to. His main difficulty, as I have already shewn in some of my previous lectures, is the false logic which underlies his philosophy,—the erroneous view that distinctions are divisions. As we have also seen, he himself feels the inadequacy of this view, and yet knows not how to rise to a higher. In the present case, action and inaction, which are indeed distinguishable from each other, are taken by him to be separable. The self, which makes all actions possible and remains unchanged in the midst of changes, seems to be inactive, unrelated to all action and change. The determinant of change must indeed be distinguished from the changes it determines. But abstract the idea of change, altogether from the determinant of change, and try to think of the latter by itself, and you land in a mere vacuum,—you have no idea before you. In the same manner, take away the idea of the imperfect from the perfect, of the unliberated from the liberated, and you see that the latter ideas disappear altogether. The perfect and the



## LECTURE X

liberated can be thought of only as working for the perfection of the imperfect, the liberation of the unliberated. To say that the former have no duties to themselves, but have duties to others, is again to talk of an abstraction, for to the fully enlightened the so called 'others' are not really others, they are their *alter-egos*, their other selves, and duties to them are ultimately duties to themselves. However, I do not expect that this brief statement and criticism of the *Gītā* doctrine of *karma* will be quite satisfactory to you. I have given it only that it may be of some help to you in following me in a closer examination of the doctrine, to which I now proceed.

As to the inactivity of the real self, the *Gītā* says in chapter iii :

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः ।

अहंकारविमूढात्मा कर्त्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥

तद्विस्तृ मद्वावाहो-गुणकर्मविभागयोः ।

गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त इति मत्वा न संजने ॥

“Actions are done in all cases by Prakriti's *gunas*. One whose mind is deluded, by *ahankāra*, egotism, thinks, ‘I am the doer.’ But he who knows the truth, O mighty-armed, about the divisions of *gunas* and actions, does not become attached (that is, does not impute actions to himself), knowing that the *gunas* (as sense-organs) act upon the *gunas* (as sense-objects.)” (27,28.)

Again, more explicitly in chapter xviii. :—

पञ्चैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे ।  
 सांख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्ध्ये सर्वकर्मणाम् ॥  
 अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग् विधम् ।  
 विविधाश्च पृथक् चेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥  
 शरीरवाङ्मनोभिर्यत् कर्म प्रारभते नरः ।  
 न्याय्यं वा विपरीतं वा पञ्चैते तस्य हेतवः ॥  
 तत्रैवं सति कर्तारमात्मानं केवलं तु यः ।  
 पश्यत्यकृतबुद्धित्वाद्वा स पश्यति दुर्मतिः ॥  
 यस्य नाहंकृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते ।  
 हत्वापि स इमांल्लोकान् हन्ति न निबध्यते ॥

“Learn from me, O mighty-armed, the five factors in the accomplishment of all actions, as they are taught in the Sankhya Philosophy. They are the body, the agent (that is *ahankāra*), the various organs, the various functions (for instance that of the in-coming and out-going breath) and, fifthly, the help of the deities (such as that of Vāyu and Aditya). Whatever action a man does by his body, speech or mind, whether it be right or the reverse, these five are its cause. Such being the case, one who, on account of an un-enlightened understanding, looks upon the detached self as the doer, such a man of perverted intelligence does not really see. He who has no egotism, whose mind is not attached, (that is, who does not consider himself as

an agent) 'even though he kills these creatures, does not really kill, nor is he bound.'"(13-17)

All this, if seriously accepted, does away altogether with the sense of moral responsibility, and the author of the *Gita* has the hardihood to say that the Lord does not hold any one responsible for his actions or rather 'his actions' falsely so-called, for he, in his true selfhood, has no actions. In chapter v it is said :

न कर्तृत्वं न कर्मणि लोकस्य एजति प्रभुः ।

न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ॥

नादत्ते कस्यचित् पापं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः ।

अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः ॥

"The Lord creates neither agency nor actions for people, nor the connection of the agent with the fruits of his actions ; but in this matter it is Svabháva (i. e. Prakriti) that acts. The Lord accepts neither any one's sin nor any one's virtue. Knowledge is enveloped by ignorance and so are creatures deluded." (15,16.)

But as we have already seen in some of our previous lectures, these utterances on the inactivity of the self are crossed by numerous utterances of an opposite import, clearly admitting the activity of the self, both in its universal and individual aspects, that is both as Paramátmá and Jivátmá. And it could not but be so. A follower of the Sankhya

Philosophy may consistently talk of the inactivity of the self and attribute all activity to Prakriti. But 'this is impossible for a Vedantist, to whom there is only one reality and one agent, and that is the self, whether he considers it as universal or individual. He may censure the egotism of an individual self if it arrogates an absolutely independent agency to itself, for its agency is a derived and subordinate agency, dependent upon the agency of the Universal Self. But he cannot, without self-contradiction, describe the individual self as inactive. As a part or manifestation of the Universal, it shares in its activity and is a responsible agent. We find therefore that ever and anon the author of the *Gita* shakes off his Sankhya preconceptions and describes both the universal and the individual self as agents, *moral* agents,—the latter as doing both virtuous and vicious deeds and the former not only approving and disapproving them respectively, but also awarding their proper fruits,—helping on those who make a good use of their gifts and making the perverse feel the worst consequences of their perversity. Thus, in chapter x, the Lord is represented as saying about the pious :—

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।

ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥

तेषां मेवानुकम्प्यार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः ।

नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्यो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥

"To these, who are ever devout and who worship me with love, I give that wisdom by which they find me. Out of compassion for them, I dwell in their hearts and dispel with the bright lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance." (10,11.)

So, in speaking of the impious in chapter xvi, the Lord is made to say what I have already quoted once, namely :

तानहं दिषतः क्रूरान् संसारेषु नराधमान् ।

क्षिपाम्यजस्रमशुभान् आसुरीष्वेव योनिषु ॥

आसुरीं योनिमापन्ना मृदा जन्मनि जन्मनि ।

मामप्राप्यैव कौन्तेय ततो यान्त्रधर्मां गतिम् ॥

"These enemies, ferocious, meanest of men, and unholy, I continually hurl down into worlds, into devilish wombs. Coming into devilish wombs, deluded in every birth, and not coming to me, they go down to the vilest state, O son of Kunti." (19,20.)

The author of the *Gītā*, therefore, cannot get rid of the idea of agency, of moral agency, with reference to either the Lord or his creatures. That he holds rational beings as responsible beings, responsible for their good and bad actions, is implied not only in the Divine approbation and condemnation exemplified in the quotations just made, but also in the oft-repeated injunction on them to act, to do their duties faithfully and unselfishly. It is only a free and active being, free to act and refrain from

acting, that can be the subject of injunctions. Nor can it be said that it is only so long as he is in bondage, so long as he ignorantly identifies himself with his subtle body—his *buddhi* and *ahankāra*—that he is the subject of injunctions, and that a liberated soul is not so. The fact that the ever-free Lord himself acts, is ever-active and wants liberated souls to act like him, shows that they are subjects of injunction and have the power to act or to desist. It is indeed said that they are not bound to act, and that by not acting they do not incur any sin and do not lose the privilege of liberated souls. As the Lord is made to say :—

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।

आत्मानेव च संकुप्यस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥

नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन ।

न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥

“That man who rejoices in the self, who is satisfied with the self, and is contented with the self, has no duties. There is no purpose here which is served by his action nor any by his inaction. In the whole world there is nothing on which he has to depend.”(III. 17,18.)

• But the conclusion which Krishna draws from this strange doctrine is not that his disciple should give up all duties, but quite the reverse, namely, that he should be ever-active and faithfully do

his duties, though why duties should at all be talked of after it has been said of the liberated man—*tasya karmyam no vidyate*—is not quite clear. However, I extract here the whole passage, very important in this connection, in which incessant activity is enjoined upon those who are said to be really inactive and to have no duties whatever, and the unceasing activity of God himself is set up as example. The passage follows immediately upon the verses I have just quoted. Krishna says :

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।  
 असक्तो ह्याचरन् कर्म परमाप्नोति पुण्यम् ॥  
 कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।  
 लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन् कर्तुमर्हसि ॥  
 यद् यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।  
 स यत् प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्त्तते ॥  
 न मे पार्थास्ति कर्त्तव्यं त्रिभुल्लोकेषु किञ्चन ।  
 नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त्त एव च कर्मणि ॥  
 यदि ह्यहं न वर्त्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः ।  
 मम वर्त्मानुवर्त्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥  
 उत्सीदीयुरिमे लोका न कुर्यां कर्म चेदहम् ।  
 सङ्करस्य च कर्त्ता स्यामुपहृन्त्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥  
 सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।  
 कुर्यादविद्वांस्यसक्तश्चिकिर्षुर्लोकं संग्रहम् ॥

“Therefore, do thy duties always without attachment, for man reaches the Supreme by doing work

without attachment. It was by means of work that Janaka and others attained perfection. Besides, thou oughtest to act with the object of setting an example to other people. Whatsoever a great man does, is done by other men also. The example he sets up is followed by other people. I have no duty, O son of Prithá in the three worlds. There is nothing unattained and to be attained by me, and yet I am working. If I should ever cease from my unwearied work, all people, O son of Prithá, would follow me. If I should not work, these worlds would be ruined, and I should be the cause of confusion and should destroy these creatures. O Bhárata, what the ignorant do through attachment, a wise man should do without attachment and for the purpose of preserving the world."

Even to the liberated man, then, duty remains, duty which he must do, and by the non-performance of which he should incur sin and cease to be perfect. In what sense, then, can it be said of the liberated man—"tasya karyam no vidyate"—"he has no duties"? It is only in the extremely qualified sense that he, so far as he identifies himself with the Absolute, sees that his liberation is eternally realised in him and is not anything to be accomplished by further efforts. But not only can the relative, the individual, never be completely identified with the Absolute, but the Absolute, the Per-



## LECTURE X

fect, too, as we have already seen, can be perfect only in relation to the imperfect, only in working for the advancement of the imperfect. Perfection can never be solitary. An absolutely monistic universe could not have anything like perfection in it. A Being absolutely one, without relation to other beings, however dependent they may be on him, could not be perfect in any sense. The perfection of the Absolute, therefore, is realised only in relation to imperfect beings. It has a meaning only with reference to them. Though, therefore, the Absolute is not subject to any law external to him and is a law unto himself, his actions being self-determined, determined by his own nature, he is not without duties, without obligations, in one sense. He has obligations, so to say, to his own perfect nature. He is bound to be loving, bound to work for his children and lead them on to perfection, to union with him in the sense possible for them. And that union, as we have already seen, allows them no liberty to be inactive, but rather commits them to unceasing activity, for he, to whom they are thus united, is himself unceasingly active. It seems to me that the author of the *Gita* felt all this, but had no language to give an adequate expression to his feeling. His Sankhya preconceptions checked his feeling, though he felt it all the same. This would be quite clear, if it were not so

already; from the following picture of a perfect life which he has given in the concluding chapter of his book. It is said to be a life of perfect wisdom, but it will be seen that it includes love and work, and is not that paradise of quietistic rest which a class of *sannyāsis* hanker after. Of the relation of work to *siddhi* or perfection, it is said :

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः ।  
 स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥  
 यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।  
 स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥

"Devoted each to his own duty, man attains perfection. Listen how one, devoted to one's duty, attains success. From whom comes the activity of all creatures and by whom all things are pervaded, by worshipping him with his own actions man attains perfection. (45, 46.)

And then the characteristics of a perfect life are thus spoken of :

सिद्धिं प्राप्तो यथा ब्रह्म तथाप्नोति निबोध मे ।  
 समासेनैव कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा ॥  
 बुद्ध्या विष्णुर्हया युक्ता धृत्यात्मनं नियम्य च ।  
 शब्दादीन् विषयांस्त्यक्त्वा नागदोषौ बुद्धस्य च ॥  
 विविक्तसेवी लज्जाशो यतवाक्कायमानसः ।  
 ध्यानयोगपरो नित्यं वैराग्यं समुपाश्रितः ॥

अहंकारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं परियच्छन् ।  
 विमुच्य निर्वन्मः शान्तो ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥  
 ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।  
 समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु सङ्गतिं लभते पराम् ॥  
 भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान् यश्चास्मि तद्धतः ।  
 ततो म्हां तत्ततो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदमन्तरम् ॥  
 सर्वकर्मण्यपि सदा कुर्वाणो मह्यपाश्रयः ।  
 मत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमव्ययम् ॥

"Hear from me how one, having attained perfection, reaches Brahman. I will tell you briefly, O son of Kunti, of the highest stage of wisdom. Endued with pure knowledge, controlling the mind with a firm resolution, abandoning sound and other objects and laying aside attachment and repulsion, accustomed to solitude, eating little, keeping under control speech, body and mind, practising constant meditation and endued with dispassion, abandoning egotism, stubbornness, arrogance, desire, anger, and possessions, and having no thought that this or that is mine, one becomes fit for becoming one with Brahman. He who has become one with Brahman is of a serene mind, and neither grieves nor desires. Impartial to all beings, he attains supreme devotion to me. By that devotion he truly understands who I am and how great. And then understanding me truly, he enters into

me. Always performing all duties with a sense of dependence on me, he, through my favour, obtains the imperishable and eternal condition." (50-56.)

This is perhaps too ascetic a view of perfection, and I need hardly say that I do not fully endorse it. The writer is far from putting the proper emphasis on activity. He has not clearly before his eyes the vision of a growing world, a world still in its infancy, but with infinite potentialities of growth, and the necessity of those who feel themselves one with its Divine Father to work unceasingly in its service. But nevertheless the ideal drawn by him is not a quietistic one. With a deep hankering after individual liberation, for attaining '*śvaśvatam padam avyam*', "the imperishable and eternal condition"—a hankering of which there is too little in modern life, but which ought really to guide all moral and social activity,—there is a clear recognition that he with whom union is thus sought is an active Being, taking thought of and working for the preservation of the world, and not for its dissolution. This appeal to the Divine activity on the part of the author of the *Gita* is so effective, that it has led even such an extreme defender of *sannyāsa* or abandonment of work as Sankara to qualify his view every now and then and, as it seems to me, to practically give it up. Those who have read Sankara's commentaries on the *Prasthā-*

*natryayam* must have seen that everywhere in these writings and specially in his commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* he fights an unceasing battle against the union of *jñāna* and *karma*, and never misses an opportunity of setting-forth the claims of *śannyāsa*, the utter abandonment of social duties. The beginning and the end of his commentary on the *Gītā* are, for instance, a long crusade against *Samuchchaya-vāda*. But after all his tirades against the union of *jñāna* and *karma*, what does his doctrine come to? The idea of Vāsudeva, the incarnation, as he believes him, of the Supreme Being, living as a householder and doing the duties of a Kshatriya, well-nigh paralyses his ascetic zeal and makes him say things which he would otherwise never have said. And when Vāsudeva himself cites Janaka and others like him, that is Aswapati, Pravāhana, and the other royal sages mentioned in the Upanishads, as having attained perfection through work, the confusion of the prince of ascetics is all but complete. He has to admit that works such as those done by Vāsudeva and these wise householders are not incompatible with *jñāna*. And why? Because, as he says, they are not works in the proper sense, being devoid of *ahankāra* and *kāma*. As every householder, aspiring after liberation, has to give up *kāma* and *ahankāra*, desire and *egotism*, and as the abandonment of these

constitutes liberation, *sannyāsa* as a distinct *āśrama* or condition becomes needless. That the spirit of the *Gītā* is opposed to such *sannyāsa*, will be clear to every one who reads it without the bias and preconception generated by any particular school of thought, and it will appear strange to such a one that so much ingenuity should have been spent in pressing the book to the service of an ascetic propaganda. However, in order to show that Sankara, when pressed hard, virtually gives up his position that the author of the *Gītā* teaches *sannyāsa* and is not a *Samuchchaya-vādī*, I make a short extract from his remarks on verse 10 of the second chapter, which, if we leave out his introduction, is really the beginning of his commentary. He says :

अथ त्वज्ञानाद् रागादिदोषतो वा कर्मणि प्रवृत्तस्य यज्ञेन दानेन तपसा वा विशुद्धसत्त्वस्य ज्ञानमुत्पन्नं परमार्थतत्त्वविषयम् एकमेवेदं सर्वं ब्रह्माकर्तृ चेति तस्य कर्मणि कर्मप्रयोजने निवृत्तेऽपि लोकसंग्रहायं यत्पूर्वं यथाप्रवृत्तस्यैव कर्मणि प्रवृत्तस्य यत् प्रवृत्तिरूपं दृश्यते न तत् कर्म्येन बुद्धेः समुच्चयः स्यात् । यथा भगवतो वासुदेवस्य क्षात्रकर्म्येष्टितं न ज्ञानेन समुच्चयते पुरुषार्थमिच्छये, तद्वत् फलाभिसम्बन्धकाराभावस्य तुल्यात्वात् विदुषः । तत्त्वित्तु नाहं करोमीति मन्यते न च तद् फलमभिसम्बन्धे । ... अत्र यच्च “पूर्वैः पूर्वतरं कृतं,” “कर्म्यैव हि संसिद्धिमाप्नुता जनकादयः,” इति, तत् प्रविभज्य ज्ञेयम्, तत् कथम् ? यदि तावत् पूर्वैः जनकादयस्तत्विदोऽपि प्रवृत्तकर्म्याः सुखं लोक-

संयत्तायै "गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्ते" इति ज्ञानेनैव संसिद्धिमाप्तिताः । कर्मा-  
संग्राहे प्राप्तेऽपि कर्मणा सदैव संसिद्धिमाप्तिता न कर्मसंग्राहं कृत-  
वन्त इत्यर्थः ।

That is,

"Now, a person who, having been first engaged in works owing to ignorance and worldly attachment and other evil tendencies, and having since obtained purity of mind by sacrificial rites, gifts, austerity &c., arrives at the knowledge of the grand truth that "All this is one, the Brahman, the non-agent," may continue performing works in the same manner as before with a view to setting an example to others, though neither works nor their results attract him any longer. This semblance of activity on his part is not such work as can be said to be conjoined with knowledge. As the Lord Vāsudeva's activity in discharge of his duties as a Kshatriya cannot be said to be conjoined with knowledge for the purpose of attaining liberation, so a wise man's activity cannot be said to be so conjoined, because it is similar to the Lord's activity in point of the absence of the desire for results and of egotism. The wise man thinks that he is not the agent and he does not desire the fruit of his action. . . . Now, as regards the passages, "Do thou also perform action as did the ancients in older times" and "By action alone did

Janaka and others aim at perfection," we must distinguish two cases and interpret the passages thus: First suppose that Janaka and the rest were engaged in works, though they knew the truth. Then they did so for setting an example to others, knowing "that the *gunas* worked upon the *gunas*". Thus they reached perfection by knowledge alone. Though the stage of renunciation had been reached, they attained perfection even though working,—they did not renounce work." So far Sankara. I leave out his second case, as that is not relevant to the point we are discussing. Now, a contradiction involved in this ascetic view of *karma*, which I have hitherto only indirectly hinted at, will perhaps be clear from the passage just quoted. The Lord's *karma*, says Sankara, is no real *karma*, because it is devoid of *ahankāra* and *kāma*, egotism and desire. And so is the *karma* of the wise man. The question now is, if the Lord's work is not really his work, whose work is it? The ascetic's reply would be—Māyā's work. And what is Māyā? Māyā is the Lord's power—'*Paramesha-sakti*'—would be the Māyāvadi's reply. And here lies the contradiction. Where the Māyāvadi seems to escape the contradiction, he does so only by virtually giving up his Monism and postulating Māyā as something different from the Lord. If Māyā is nothing but the power of the Lord, the Lord is



really active and not apparently so. And the same remark applies to the doctrine that the Lord is *nishkāma*, desireless. As we have already seen, the Absolute can have no desire for himself, being eternally perfect. But as wishing *loka sangraha*, in the words of the *Gītā*, he has desire—an eternal and unextinguishable desire for the maintenance and perfection of the world created by him. And so far as the wise man identifies himself with the Lord, he too has the same desire, and is not *nishkāma* in an absolute sense. Now, I wish, my dear friends, that you should most seriously ponder upon these truths. The ascetic view of life has too long tampered with the solemnity of Duty and made light of the responsibilities of the domestic and the social life. Its baneful effect on our national life has been subtle, and far-reaching. Even while failing to wean men away from the *grihasthāsrama*, the householder's life, it has made millions unloving and undutiful householders and selfish and lazy citizens of the state. Now, I shall consider my present labours amply rewarded if I can, with the valuable help of the *Gītā*, inspire some of my hearers with a feeling of the reality and solemnity of life and duty, and with a living faith in the love and ceaseless activity of God within and without us. In our present lecture, we have discussed only one aspect of the

*Gita* doctrine of *karma*,—its relation to *jñāna*. The important *Gita* doctrines of *karmārpana* and *nishkāma-karma* have yet to be examined, and in discussing them, we shall see that in propounding these doctrines, the author of the *Gita*, under difficulties\* and limitations arising from of his peculiar position, utters the sublimest truths,—truths which light the path of life as much in these days as they did in that far-off past when they were first uttered.

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## LECTURE XI

### The Ethical Ideal of the *Bhagavadgītā*

The ethical ideal of the *Bhagavadgītā*, its ideal of an active life, which is also practically identical with its intellectual and spiritual ideal, is variously called *Brāhmīsthiti*, *Brahmasamsthā*, *Brahma-bhāva*, *Brahmanirvāṇa* and so on. It is union or assimilation with Brahman in action, acting from the divine standpoint—in the same way as God does. We have already seen that though not quite free from a leaning towards the Sankhya doctrine of the essential inactivity of *Purusha*, the author of the *Gītā* practically sets aside that doctrine and bases his doctrine of *karma* on the truly Vedantic idea of an active self—that of an active God and active emanations or children of that God. We have also seen where the error of the Sankhya doctrine and that of the *Gītā* doctrine in so far as the *Gītā* follows the Sankhya, lie. It is the erroneous view that distinctions are divisions, and in the present case, the idea that change and the determinant of change, which are distinguishable, are different things and do not imply each other. As we have already seen, the Sankhya philosophy conceives Prakriti's activity as due to Purusha's *sānnidhya*

or presence and yet pronounces the latter as inactive. \* This doctrine takes, in the *Gita*, the form of a transcendent Brahman untouched by Nature's changes and yet determining them,—a form which the author, as we have seen, cannot successfully reconcile with his Vedantic Monism. Now, though I have already said much on this point in my last and previous lectures, I feel as if I had not said enough on it and had not yet laid my hand on the root of the error—the error of an inactive self and an inactive God, at any rate in a way that might produce full conviction in the minds of my hearers. The root of the error lies in the idea that knowledge is conceivable without activity, that it is essentially an unchangeable, statical reality, without any dynamical elements, any elements of change, in it. The world of change, the world in which we practically live, move and have our being, is conceived to have only a contingent relation with the real Self,—with God, who is our true Self,—a relation which might not as well exist, though it actually does exist, and hence thinkers like Sankara, who wish to be consistent with their Monism, unavoidably pronounces it to be only *vyavaharika* in existence—existing only for ignorance, and not for real knowledge. But what does a true analysis of knowledge really disclose

as to the essential character of knowledge? Analyse any act of knowledge, however simple—any manifestation of the Absolute, however partial, and you will find that it is very different from a fixed, statical, unchanging reality, and that its life consists in—that it maintains itself by—unceasing activity. Take for example the note-book in my hand and see what is implied in my knowledge of it. That I have the sensations of colour and touch in seeing and touching it, is an active manifestation of the self I call mine. That in the midst of the constant change of these sensations moment after moment, I continue to identify them as white and black, as hard and soft,—that is, to unify them under these general conceptions,—is another active manifestation of the same self. We indeed make a distinction between a continually changing sensibility and the understanding self as constant. But the changing sensibility is inseparable from the understanding and is only one aspect of the same undivided Reality. And the understanding that maintains its identity in the midst of changes, is not an invariable identity, but an identity-in-difference—knowing itself as the knower of each and all of these changes. If the changes may be represented by a, b, c, and so on, the self that knows them should be represented not as mere K, K, K, but as Ka, Kb and Kc, or

rather Ka, Kab, and Kabc, that is, not as an invariable and absolutely unchanging witness, but as one who, identifying himself with each of these appearances, maintains his unchangeability in the midst of changes, or, in other words, whose changeability and unchangeability are necessary moments or aspects of the same fact. If, again, I relate, as I must, the present changes to those which have preceded them and will follow them in the same time-series, which I must conceive as without beginning and without end, and if I believe, as I must, the self I call my own as identical with the Universal Self for which this infinite series exists, I must conceive this Universal Self all the same as an active Self, maintaining itself by ceaseless activity. The Self, in its universal aspect, could not be essentially different in character from the self in its individual aspect. Cosmic changes must bear the same relation to the Universal Self as the changes of our individual lives bear to the selves we call ours. They must be active manifestations of that Self. And as our actions, both those which we call voluntary and those which we call involuntary, are all purposive, leading to certain ends, so must we conceive the actions of the Universal Self also to be. The distinction we draw between these two classes of actions is indeed real so far as it goes, but it should

not be overdrawn. My reading of this paper I call a voluntary act, because I am individually conscious of its purpose. My re-awakening from sleep is an involuntary act, because it is reflex and by my individual volition ; but that reflex itself is as my reading, is evident both from the fact that it is the action of a self, the same self that I call my own, the same that causes my volition, and that it leads to an end or ends as much as my reading. In fact it is only an extremely small fraction of the events of my mental life that is caused by my individual volition, the vast majority of them being involuntary. But the latter nevertheless are the manifestations of a conscious self, a self which, though I call it my own, is continually transcending the limits of individuality and showing itself as identical with the Universal. However, the actions of the self being purposive, directed to definite ends, they must be ascribed to beneficial ends,—to love, and love of the most perfect kind and degree. As I have argued at some length in my *Philosophy of Brahmanism*, the existence of an ideal of perfect love in us, individuals, and the actual manifestation of such love in exalted characters like Buddha and Jesus, characters which we understand and appreciate by the light within us, prove the Divine love to be perfect in kind and

degree; a love that takes special notice of every individual\* and leads him on to his highest good. We must therefore ascribe cosmic events and the events of our individual life to Divine love—an ever-active and ever-vigilant love which watches and takes care of each and all of us every moment of our life. But though active with an ever-active love, the perfect One can have no wants of his own. Though led on by a ceaseless desire to perfect his children, he can have no desire for any conceivable good attainable by him for his own self. Hence he is self-contented, contented with the fullness of his own power, wisdom, love and holiness, and desireless in the sense explained, his activity directed only to the good of the world. Now, it is an ideal of activity such as this, an ideal eternally realised in the Supreme Being, that the author of the *Gita* holds before every one aspiring after perfection. If you have understood the teachings of the *Gita* so far as I have explained them, you will never say that the ideal is far-fetched and impracticable. It is not a life lived once for all in a far off age, under conditions which no more obtain now, that we are asked to follow. The *Gita's* God, as you have seen, is an ever-living Being present in and around us, one whom we see and feel at every turn, however little we may recognise him, but of whom we can have a conscious vision within us if we rise



to *dhyāna-yoga*, and without us if by a course of *sādhana* we exchange our fleshy eyes for *dīpya chakshu* and are blessed with *visvarūpa-darsana*. In every age, in every generation, nay in every life, the incarnation of the Logos in man re-starts in a fresh form the problems of life, individual and social, and gives a fresh solution of them suited to the times and to each person's peculiar environments, so that he is never left in the dark, if he is an earnest seeker after truth, as to how he should think, feel, speak and act in order that he may be assimilated to his Divine Ideal. As the Divine Being in the *Gītā* says, in words some of which I have already quoted more than once in my previous lectures,—

महिन्ता मङ्गतप्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम् ।

कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च ॥

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।

ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थम् अहमज्ञानजं तमः ।

नाश्रयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥ (X. 9-11)

“Those whose thoughts are centred in me and who live in me, rejoice in conferring with one another and constantly speaking of me. To these who are ever devout and who worship me with love, I give that wisdom by which they find me. Out of compassion for them, I dwell in

their hearts and dispel with the bright lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance."

You will also remember the verses quoted in my last lecture, describing in words ascribed to the Lord his motive for action. He says :

न मे परिधांस्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।

नानवाप्तमपाप्तञ्च वर्त्त एव च कर्मणि ॥

यदि ह्यहं न वर्त्तयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः ।

मम वर्त्मानुवर्त्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥

उत्सीदियुरिमे लोका न कुर्यां कर्म चेदहम् ।

सङ्करस्य च कर्त्तास्यामुपहृष्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥

"I have no duty, O son of Prithá, in the three worlds. There is nothing unattained and to be attained by me, and yet I am working. If I should ever cease from my unwearied work, all people, O son of Prithá, would follow me. If I should not work, these worlds would be ruined, and I should be the cause of confusion and should destroy these creatures."

We thus understand what the author of the *Gita* means by describing the Lord as self-contented and desireless in his actions and by wanting us, finite beings, to act from the same standpoint. These attributes must be taken in a qualified sense. It is as Absolute that the Lord is self-contented and desireless, for, from the absolute standpoint, from the standpoint of the eternally perfect One, there

is nothing to be desired and accomplished. . But in relation to the finite world, the world of finite beings, he is neither self-contented nor desireless. From this standpoint there is always something to be desired, something not accomplished, *anavṛtāntam*, *avṛtāntavyam*. It is the same with the 'Lord's worshippers,—those who truly know him and really worship him. In so far as they feel oneness with him—oneness in their inmost parts, oneness of essence as well as of will—they are self-contented and desireless, rejoicing in the divine fullness, which they feel as their own, and desiring nothing. But in so far as they feel their limitations as finite beings, and those of other finite beings about them, they are not self-contented and desireless, they find much to desire and to do. And they are active, as the Lord is, and try to assimilate their activity to the Divine activity as much as possible. For finite beings endowed with bodies, senses and organs, this assimilation must always be a gradual process and never a perfect realisation. Our bodies are our own, distinguished from the bodies of our fellow-creatures, and though they can undoubtedly be made the instruments of serving others, their maintenance and preservation is always more or less a personal, individual affair. Our senses and organs are instinctively and primarily egoistic—inclined to self-preservation and

self-satisfaction. There are indeed altruistic feelings and passions in us, to which our senses and organs can, to a large extent, be made subservient, but unless they are fostered and developed with care, they die out as in the inferior animals. Now, it is this animal part of our nature—our senses and organs—the part which seems to be the most undivine, that engages the most anxious attention of the author of the *Gītā* in the first *shatka* of his book and more or less in all parts of it. He feels that unless it is subdued and brought under control, liberation or assimilation with God is impossible. As we have seen, our animal nature is instinctively egoistic, and liberation is altruism itself, the very opposite and utter sublation of egoism. The senses and the organs are the sources of desire,—egoistic or selfish desire,—and such desire is of the very essence of bondage. It might seem therefore that the utter eradication of desire (*kāma*) and its correlative, repulsion or anger (*krodha*) is an essential condition of liberation. And several passages of the *Gītā* show as if its author aimed at nothing less than such an eradication. From what he says in these passages, it seems as if according to him desire was the root of all moral evils and the enemy of all spiritual efforts and as if all the energies of our soul should be concentrated in purging the heart of this radical taint of our

nature. For instance, in the third chapter of the book, in answer to Arjuna's question, 'What leads man to commit sin, Krishna says :—

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुण-समुद्भवः ।  
 महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥  
 धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निं र्यथादर्शो मलेन च ।  
 यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥  
 आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा ।  
 कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च ॥  
 इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।  
 एतैर्विमोह्यतेष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥  
 तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतवर्षभ ।  
 पापानां प्रजाहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥

That is, "It is desire, it is repulsion, born of the *guna*, *rajas*, wide-mouthed and a great source of sin, which you must know as the foe here. As fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror by dust, as the foetus is enclosed in the womb, so is this, i.e. wisdom, hidden by it. Wisdom, O son of Kunti, is hidden by this constant enemy of the wise, desire, an insatiable fire. The senses, the sensorium and the understanding are said to be its seat. Hiding wisdom with these, it deludes the embodied being. Therefore, O chief of the Bharatas, restraining first the senses and the rest, cast off this sinful thing

which is destructive of knowledge and wisdom. (37-43.)

Now what does Krishna mean by saying that desire deludes the embodied being by hiding wisdom with the senses, the sensorium and the understanding ? His meaning seems to be that desire for the objects of these organs leads us to mistake these organs themselves as our true self and ignore its real character. Mistaking these as our self, we are absorbed in satisfying them and neither aspire after nor attain to *atma-yoga*, establishment in our true self, which transcends these finite objects. This transcendent self, which our desire for finite things leads us to ignore, is indicated in the very next two verses, the closing verses of the chapter. Krishna says :

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।

मनसस्तु परा बुद्धि र्यो बुद्धेः परंतस्तु सः ॥

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्या संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।

अहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥

"The wise say the senses are great. But greater than the senses is the sensorium, and greater than the sensorium is the understanding. He who is greater than the understanding is the self. Thus knowing the self to be greater than the understanding, and composing the mind by the self, slay thou, O mighty-armed, the enemy, desire, so hard

to conquer." We are thus taught to concentrate our thoughts on the Infinite in us, our true Self and the only Reality properly so called, and to renounce all desires for finite things, things which are only relatively and not absolutely real. But when we have thus reached the Absolute and known and felt all other things to be only relative, relative to him, the Absolute, have we really got rid of desire altogether? Is not the wish, the aspiration, the striving, so long and strenuous, to realise and be established in our true Self itself desire? And have we not seen that the Absolute himself, for whose sake we are told to give up all desires, is full of the inexhaustible desire for perfecting the world created by him? And further, when finite things like the senses, the sensorium, the understanding and their various objects have been subsumed under the Absolute and seen not as independent realities, but as relative to him, his parts, aspects, manifestations, reproductions, appearances, works, effects—in whatever way you may express their relation to him, do they cease, as such, to be objects of desire—purified desire, let us say—desire always enlightened by insight into their true nature, their relation to the Absolute? As we have already seen partly, an attentive reader of the *Bhagavadgītā* cannot but think that its author knew the right answer to these ques-

tions, though his expression is often unguarded and defective. It is evidently desire in the ordinary sense, desire for finite things as such, desire not enlightened and purified by insight into the relative nature and relative value of these things,—it is evidently such desire that he teaches us to renounce. He must have seen that an absolute renunciation of desire—renunciation of it in all forms whatever—is impossible, and as undesirable as it is impossible. To have no desire, high or low, to desire nothing in heaven or earth, would be, if it were at all possible, not liberation, but the most perfect bondage conceivable. It would be not life in God, but the most complete death imaginable—reducing oneself to a block of lifeless and motionless marble. It is then the desire for finite objects conceived as absolute and as ends in themselves, that we are asked to renounce. And it is such objects that our senses and organs, in their instinctive blindness, ceaselessly pursue. Even ordinary wisdom, the wisdom of the world, sees nothing wrong in such pursuit. If the current rules of good conduct, the principles of social morality, veracity, justice, chastity, &c. are respected, and a certain amount of charity and benevolence goes with them, the world, even the ordinary religious world, sees nothing undesirable in the pursuit of riches, fame and the pleasures of the senses for their own sakes.



It is only the highest wisdom, the philosophy of of Brahman, such as the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavadgītā* inculcate, that rises above this worldly scheme of life and points to a higher ideal, an ideal which, in the absence of a better name, the latter calls *nishkāma karma*. When this ideal flashes before our mind's eye, ordinary life, even what is usually called a pure life—life, illumined perhaps by fixed hours of prayer—seems a life of bondage. It is only then—when this feeling of bondage is felt—that we have truly become *mumukshus*, aspirants after liberation. It is when real light comes—however momentarily—that darkness becomes truly visible. Before that—before the dawning of the light of *Brahmajñāna*—men are really *baddha*—in utter bondage, and the question “What shall I do to be saved?”—“*Katham tareyam*?”—has not been truly asked, because salvation has not been tasted even for a moment, so as to awaken a desire for it. However, when the true light dawns, and as it dawns more and more brightly in hours of deep communion, it is more and more deeply felt how blindly the senses and the organs act, how little they are enlightened, guided and purified by true wisdom,—by the vision of God as All-in-all. They act so blindly, so wrongly, and thus present such obstacles to the realisation of the divine ideal that has dawned before

the soul, that it is felt to be absolutely necessary to draw them back every now and then from their respective fields of action,—their objects—and let them feel the purifying heat of a blazing *dhyāna-yoga*, such as is described in the sixth chapter of the *Gītā* and in other parts of it. It is only thus, by the constant exercise of deep meditation and communion, by constantly looking at things from the divine standpoint, that the blindness and wildness that characterise our ordinary thought and conduct can be corrected and our senses and organs be purified at their very root. For it is the view that we habitually take in our inmost thoughts of the nature and value of things with which we are surrounded, that guides our imagination, feelings and actions, and it is the constant rectification of this view by a true view of things, such as dawns in us in moments of highest communion with God, that can lead us gradually to true life—to a life of real union with him. We thus see what the *Gītā* means by its oft-repeated exhortations to restrain our senses and organs. Sometimes it seems as if it taught an absolute restraint of them—consigning them to perpetual starvation and inactivity. But there are passages of unmistakable meaning which show that the author's real aim is to teach their purification and proper regulation by true wisdom. That this wisdom is not

a mere intellectual vision of the highest truth, but a vision of it suffused by emotion, by love and reverence,—we have seen in some of our previous lectures ; but in this respect the *Gita* is too brief and fails to put the proper emphasis on the importance of pure emotions—emotions purified by true wisdom, and, I may add, such emotions as true wisdom alone awakens in the soul. From the superficial reader, therefore, the *Gita* scheme of life cannot escape the accusation of being ascetic in its tendency, and we have seen that even to deep philosophers, strongly biassed by their own monasticism, the book has seemed a defence of that view of life. However, let me examine somewhat closely the main lines of the *Gita* teaching on the purification of our senses and organs by true wisdom and their guidance by the ideals of *nishkāma karma* and *Brahmārpana*. In chapter ii, Krishna, in reply to Arjuna's query, speaks of the characteristics of a स्थितप्रज्ञ person—a person of unshaken or established wisdom. The first of these characteristics is the utter renunciation of selfish desire. And as it is the existence of such desire that moves us in joy and sorrow,—makes us exult in worldly gain and pleasure and reduce us to deep depression when we are face to face with loss and sorrow, the second characteristic of a स्थितप्रज्ञ soul is perfect composure—

immovableness in joy and grief, loss and gain. The third characteristic is the perfect control of the senses and organs—their regulation by reason. The author of the *Gītā* knows very well that a mere ascetic suppression of their exercise is unavailing. Though starved and not allowed to range among their objects, they may yet retain their attachment to these objects. Such attachment is removed only by the vision of the Supreme Beauty. When that is seen and loved, finite objects as such cease to be loved, because they lose their attractiveness in the presence of the Supremely Attractive. It is right love alone that cures wrong love ; dry wisdom is quite unequal to the task. In the same manner, the mere renunciation of selfish desire cannot be a guide to action. As right love alone can cure wrong love, so right desire alone can replace wrong desire. And the author of the *Gītā* knows this very well. His substitute for *kāma*, desire, is *Brahmārpana*, resignation to God, and, as he calls the same thing otherwise, *yajna*, worship. I shall, however, now let him speak for himself. In the following rather long extract, which, by the way, is a good specimen of the characteristic style of the *Gītā*, at once poetic and philosophical, we find all the characteristics of a man of unshaken wisdom which I have just enumerated :—

प्रजहाति यदा कामान् सर्वान् पार्थ मनोरथान् ।

आत्मनेऽवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥

दुःखेषु नुहि प्रमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।

दोतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥

यः सर्व्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।

नाभिनन्दन्ति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

विषया विनिवर्त्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।

रसवर्ज्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्त्तते ॥

यततोऽपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।

इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥

तानि सर्व्वानि संयम्य युक्त आसीत भूतपरः ।

वशे हि यसेन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।

सङ्गात् सञ्जायते कामः कामात् क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥

क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः संमोहात् स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।

स्मृतिभ्रंसाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात् प्रणश्यति ॥

रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयान् इन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।

आत्मवैशैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ॥

प्रसादे सर्व्वदुःखानां हानिरस्योपजायते ।

प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यव्रतिष्ठते ॥

नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना ।

न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ॥

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।

तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायर्णावभिवान्मसि ॥

तस्माद् यस्य महाबाहो निरुद्धितानि सर्वशः ।  
 इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थं त्यक्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥  
 या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।  
 यस्यां जायति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥  
 आपूर्यग्रास्यमचलप्रतिष्ठं समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यदवत् ।  
 तदवत् कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वं स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामौ ॥  
 विहाय कामान् यः सर्वान् पुमांश्चरति निष्कृद् ।  
 निर्ममो निरद्वेषारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥  
 एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।  
 स्थित्वास्थामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्व्याणम् ऋच्छति ॥

That is,

“When a man, satisfied in the self by the self, completely casts off all the desires of his heart, then is he called one of unshaken wisdom. He whose heart is not troubled in sorrow, who is free from desire in the midst of pleasures, free from attachment, fear and anger, is a sage of unshaken wisdom. His wisdom is unshaken, who is without attachment to all things and who, on meeting with good or evil, neither rejoices in the one nor is repelled by the other. His wisdom is unshaken who can withdraw his senses from their objects as a tortoise can draw in its limbs from all sides. The senses of the man who starves them draw back, but attachment to things does not cease. It

ceases when the Supreme is seen. O son of Kunti, the uncontrolled senses even of a wiseman striving to restrain them forcibly leads his mind astray. Restraining them all, one should remain steadfast and intent on me. His wisdom alone is unshaken whose senses are under control. When a man thinks of objects, attachment to them arises. From attachment arises desire, and from desire anger (when desire is frustrated by some cause or other). From anger arises delusion, from delusion a loss of memory (*i.e.* the forgetfulness of higher truths); from loss of memory the destruction of wisdom, and from the destruction of wisdom he is utterly ruined. But he, of a firm will, who enjoys objects with senses bereft of love and hate, and under his own control, attains peace. When peace comes, all his miseries end, for the wisdom of a man whose heart is in peace soon becomes unshaken. There is no wisdom for the man who cannot fix his mind, nor is meditation possible for him. For the unmeditative there is no peace, and for the peaceless how can there be happiness? The mind which is led by uncontrolled senses, leads astray the owner's reason, as the wind carries adrift a boat in the sea. Therefore, O mighty-armed, his wisdom alone is unshaken whose senses are entirely restrained from their objects. In that which is night to all other beings (that is, the state of union

with the Supreme) the self-controlled person is awake; and that in which other beings are awake, (that is, the state of blind attachment to the senses,) is night to the sage who sees. As rivers enter the sea; which is filled and unmoved, so he whom objects of desire enter, attains peace, and not he who desires such objects. He attains peace who gives up all desires and moves about free from attachment, selfishness and egotism. This, O son of Prithá, is the divine standpoint. 'One who attains this is never deluded. If one reaches it even in his last days, he obtains absorption in Brahman.' (II. 55-72.)

Now, the ideal here set forth may very well appear quite impracticable for the man of the world, for the householder; for him who cares for domestic and social life. It may seem practicable, if at all, only to the mendicant and the anchorite. And we see that Sankara unhesitatingly takes it as such. But to take it so is to misunderstand it, at any rate to misunderstand its deeper meaning. We are asked to renounce all desires, desire for all objects, and yet to enjoy all objects. Sankara interprets this injunction as meaning that we are to enjoy only that much of worldly objects which is necessary for the preservation of our lives. When life is understood in its true and complete sense, its preservation is found to imply nothing short of



the enjoyment of all comforts—the conquest of all the forces of Nature. But we may take it for granted that Sankara had not this comprehensive view of life, and meant by its preservation only the keeping up of the vital spark and just health and strength enough to propagate his views. This cannot be the meaning of the author of the *Bhagavad-gita*, because, negatively, he never gives such a narrow view of life throughout his book, and positively, because he preaches, along with his doctrine of renunciation, a doctrine of all-round enjoyment and all-round action. As we have already seen, we are to renounce desire for objects and yet enjoy them; we are to renounce selfish motives of action, and yet act. We must therefore accept his philosophy of renunciation in a qualified sense. As I have already briefly suggested, we are to renounce the desire for objects as objects, as realities conceived to be independent of God and unrelated to the divine scheme of life. But when objects are seen in their true light, as parts and aspects of God, and as conducing to the realisation of the ideal of life divinely laid down for us, not only do they cease to be things fit to be renounced, but the love of them and loving care for their attainment and preservation becomes a part or form of love to God. Riches, honour, power, comfort, wife, children, relatives, friends and all other things which an

ascetic philosophy teaches us to renounce, at any rate to be indifferent to, are all, when seen in their true light, parts and manifestations of God and divinely appointed means to the attainment of the the highest end of life. It is only blind attachment to them as things important in themselves which is condemned, and condemned only for the wise,—those who have known God truly and his relation to the world. For the ignorant, those who are yet incapable of rising to the divine view of things, attachment to finite things, within the limits allowed by social morality, is not only unavoidable, but even morally necessary, necessary as a course of education towards the gradual attainment of the highest wisdom. The author of the *Gita* therefore warns the wiseman not to disturb the worldly attachment of the ignorant, and teaches him rather to encourage their performance of duty from their own standpoint by his example, though his standpoint is quite different from theirs. This is the real meaning of the following verse, which is sometimes tortured into hypocritical conformity to practices which one does not approve. The author says :

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मासङ्गिनाम् ।

जोषयेत् सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान् युक्तः समाचरन् ॥

“A wiseman should not unsettle the minds of the ignorant who are attached to actions (that is,

actions done from more or less interested motives). He should teach them to do all duties by himself performing them with a mind steadied in *yoga*." However, our interpretation of the *Gita's* practical philosophy is, it will be seen, in perfect harmony with its theory of the world,—its idea of God and his relation to man and Nature. To the *Máyavádin* finite things are simply the opposite of God, and as God alone is real, they are false. The injunction, therefore, to renounce the desire for finite objects and seek God, must be taken in an unqualified sense. God minus the world, that is, an abstract subject without relation to objects, must be made the object of love, if anything like this is at all possible, and all dealings with man and Nature must be regarded as a necessary evil, unavoidable so long as we are burdened with a body, but to be totally abjured at the very first chance. I cannot say that the author of the *Gita* is quite free from this *Máyik* and ascetic way of thinking. Occasionally he seems to lean towards it; but as I have shown in my previous lectures, his better mind, his more serious view of the nature of Reality, is opposed to such thinking. His God is—to put the matter briefly in current philosophical phraseology—not an abstract but a concrete Universal, comprehending and not excluding, men and Nature. And his practical

philosophy, his ideal of life, is in consonance with his view of God. To love God is not to hate the world, but to love it also,—love it, not as something other than God, but as a part and manifestation of him. The real antithesis, seen more or less in all forms of the religious life, between God and the world, is not between him and the world truly conceived—conceived as his manifestation—but between him and the world misconceived as his opposite, as something other than and opposed to him. As this misconception, this *avidyā* or *māyā*, in some form or other, gross or subtle, sticks to us long in our gradual progress towards the divine life, though getting subtler and subtler as we advance, an antithetical movement may be said to form a part of religious endeavour. As Krishna himself says :

दैवीशेषा गुणमयी मम माया दूरत्वया ।

मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥

“Verily this divine power of illusion wielded by me and made up of *gunas* is hard to overcome. It is only those who take refuge in me that get rid of it.” (VII. 14.)

However, let us now come to *Brahmārpana* and *yajna*. As I have already said, they are the positive side of the renunciation of desire. The former means giving up actions to God, to know

and be always conscious that they are his, and to regard oneself as his servant or instrument. *Yajna* means worship. In its ordinary acceptation it means the presentation of offerings to the gods, but while recognising this sense and enjoining such offerings, the author of the *Gītā* also uses the word in the deeper sense of the worship of the Supreme Being and insists upon the performance of our duties, nay even the satisfaction of our animal wants, as such worship. *Brahmārpana* and *yajna*, as ideals of practical life, are therefore substantially the same. Here are some of the more important verses of the *Gītā* on these ideals gathered from various chapters. Krishna says :—

कर्मणोऽपि अधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।

सा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥

योगस्यः कुरु कर्मणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।

सिद्धसिद्धीः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥ II. 47, 48.

यज्ञार्थां कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।

तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥ III. 9.

महि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संनत्याध्यातचेतसा ।

निराशी निर्धनो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥ III. 30.

गतसङ्गस्य युक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः ।

यज्ञायाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविर्तीयते ॥ IV. 23]

अथान् द्रव्यमयाद् यज्ञान् ज्ञानयः परस्तप ।

सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥ IV. 33.

ब्रह्मव्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।

क्षिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रविधान्धसा ॥

कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैरिन्द्रियैरपि ।

योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति सङ्गं त्यक्त्वात्मसुखये ॥ V. 10, 11.

संभ्रम्यते ब्रह्मनिर्वाणम् ऋषयः शौचकल्याणाः ।

क्षिप्रद्वैषा यतात्मानः सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥ V. 25.

यत् करोषि यदस्यासि यच्च ह्येषि ददासि यत् ।

यत् तपस्वसि कोत्सेय तत् कुर्वण मदर्पणम् ॥ IX. 27.

That is,

“Let work alone be your concern and never its result, that is, its result as selfish gain. Make not the fruit of actions your motive, nor cherish any fondness for inaction. Do thy duties, O Dhananjaya, from the standpoint of *yoga*, free from attachment and unmoved by success and failure.\* It is equanimity, which is called *yoga*. Every work but that which is done for the sake of worship (*yajna*) binds a man in the fetters of *karma*. Do your actions, O son of Kunti, for the sake of that, that is, in the spirit of worship, and free from attachment. Giving up all actions to me, with a spiritualised heart, free from desire and egotism, fight with an untroubled mind. Of the man who is free from attachment, who is liberated, whose mind is established in wisdom, and who acts for the sake of worship, all actions melt away, that is, fail to bind him to the world. Superior to the worship with material

offerings is the worship consisting in wisdom, for all works, O son of Prithá, have wisdom for their end. He who does actions, offering them to God, and giving up attachment, is not tainted by sin, as a lotus-leaf is not drenched by water. With their bodies, sensories, understandings and senses free from egotism, the *yogis* act, without attachment, for purifying themselves. The sages attain absorption in Brahman—those whose sins have worn away, whose doubts are resolved, whose minds are steadied, and who are intent on the welfare of all creatures. Whatever you do, whatever you act, whatever you sacrifice, whatever you give away, whatever austerities you practise,—offer all to me, O son of Kunti.”

The last verse reminds the reader of the Bible of St. Paul's words, “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” (I. Corinthians, x. 31.) Now, I do not think anything I can say will make the *Gita* ideal of work as worship,—work done in the spirit of worship—clearer than these verses make it. It is evident that no higher ideal of work has been revealed anywhere else. But how little we really understand it and how less we really endeavour to realise it in practical life, though it is nothing short of such realisation that can give us the salvation we seek ! We are taught that until our uprising and

downsitting, our sleep and awakening, our eating and drinking, our labours for the earning of money and the maintenance of our families, our enjoyment of comforts and pleasures, our pursuit of knowledge, our efforts for the social, industrial and political amelioration of our country—in short all our thoughts, feelings, looks, words and actions—lose the taint of selfishness and assume the character of divine worship—the loving service of the one undivided, universal Spirit who is in all and is All-in-all,—until this transformation takes place in us, we are in bondage and far from *Brahmadhama*, the true kingdom of heaven. If, by all that I have said, I have succeeded, in even a small degree, in imbuing you with a feeling of dissatisfaction with your present moral life,—with that self-righteous and self-complacent ideal of false spirituality which we see around and which continually, deadens our aspirations, I shall feel amply rewarded for my labours in expounding the *Gītā*, and shall have the satisfaction of thinking that the first faint rays of its ethical ideal have dawned upon you. May these rays brighten up and, illumining the whole path of our life, lead us on to our heavenly goal ! In our next and concluding lecture, we shall see what help the author of the *Gītā* renders us in filling up the outline with which we have been presented in this.

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## LECTURE XII

### The *Gita* System of Practical Morals

As a text-book on practical morals, the *Bhagavadgītā* is too brief, and compares unfavourably with such popular scriptures as the *New Testament* and the *Dhammapada*. But it could scarcely be otherwise. The *Gītā* was not meant as a popular hand-book of morals and has never been so used. It is intended, not so much for the neophyte, the beginner in spiritual endeavours, as for the adept, one who has made some progress in spiritual life. As you have seen, from my tenth and eleventh lectures specially, and generally from all my previous lectures, it sets up a lofty ideal of ethical life, a higher one than which we do not find elsewhere. But as to the inculcation of particular rules and courses of conduct, it is too vague to be much of a guide to those who are in need of definite teaching on such matters. As to its being used as a text-book of morals by children and common people, people whose thoughts and feelings have not taken a definitely religious turn, the author himself seems to warn us against doing anything of the kind. About the end of his concluding chapter, he says :

इदं ते मातङ्गय नानुब्रूयिष्ये  
क्षत्रियर्ष्यामन्योऽहो ब्रह्मचर्यान्तः ।

मायासुखदुःखदेवाय न ज्ञानं योऽभ्यसूयति ॥

ब्रह्मावाननसूयश्च शृणुयादपि यो नरः ।

श्रोतुमि मुक्तः शुभां लोकान् प्राप्नुयात् पुण्यकर्मणाम् ॥

That is, "You should not communicate this to any one who does not practise austerities (that is, who is not under regular discipline), who is without reverence, who does not serve and who hates me. (xviii. 67.) If one who is reverent and without hatred, hears it, he is liberated and goes to the blessed worlds intended for the doers of holy deeds." (xviii. 71.)

However, though intended chiefly for the advanced seeker after spiritual truth, the *Gita* is not without clear indications of the lines of practical conduct which one should follow on all important matters, and for laying down such lines it adopts a method which, though not strictly logical, is in accordance with the established procedure of philosophy at the time it was written, and which commends itself as practical even in these days to large classes of thinkers. This method is the division of *gunas* and its application to the moral life. In my fourth lecture I made a brief reference to the doctrine of the three *gunas* or primary qualities of Nature. Unlike the Sankhya philosophers, the author of the *Gita* makes no use of the doctrine in explaining the evolution of the world, physical and mental ; he employs it only with reference to prac-

tical life. As you have already heard, creation, according to the Sankhya philosophy, is the result of the disturbance of the equilibrium of the three *gunas*, *sattvam*, *rajas* and *tamas*, and the variety of the products of Nature is due to the various proportions in which the *gunas* are mixed up in them. *Sattvam* is the principle of transparence or manifestation. Its results are the manifestation of knowledge and happiness in the creature. *Rajas* is the principle of attraction and activity, and in the life of rational beings, explains the various forms of desire and attachment to which they are subject, and the manifold activity resulting from them. *Tamas* is the principle of opaqueness and inertia and gives rise to all varieties of folly and the misery caused by them. Now, having explained the different characters and effects of the *gunas*, the author of the *Gita* proceeds to ascertain the relative value of actions, sentiments and things according as they show a preponderance of either *sattvam*, *rajas* or *tamas*. Before, however, we see the practical result of the application of this method, we shall hear from him directly what he has to say as to the nature of the three *gunas*. As I have already said, the chapter in which this subject is specially treated of, is the fourteenth, where he says :

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिस्त्रयम् ।

निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिन्मयम् ॥

तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात् प्रकाशकमनामयम् ।  
 सुखसङ्गेन वध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ ॥  
 रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृणासङ्गसमुद्भवम् ।  
 तद्विवध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनाम् ॥  
 तमस्तु ज्ञानजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वं देहिनाम् ।  
 प्रमादाख्यं निद्राभिस्तद्विवध्नाति भारत ॥  
 सत्त्वं सुखे सञ्चयति रजः कर्मणि भारत ।  
 ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तमः प्रमादे सञ्चयतुत ॥  
 रजस्तस्यैवाभिभूय सत्त्वं भवति भारत ।  
 रजः सत्त्वं तमश्चैव तमः सत्त्वं रजस्तथा ॥  
 सर्वदारेषु देहेऽस्मिन् प्रकाश उपजायते ।  
 ज्ञानं यदा तदा विद्याद् विवर्धं सत्त्वमितुत ॥  
 लोभः प्रवृत्तिरारम्भः कर्मणामश्रमः स्पृहा ।  
 रजसेयतानि जायन्ते विवर्धे भरतर्षभ ॥  
 अप्रकाशोऽप्रवृत्तिश्च प्रमादो मोह एव च ।  
 तमसेयतानि जायन्ते विवर्धे कुरुनन्दन ॥  
 कर्मणः सुकृतस्याहुः स्मृतिकं निर्मलं फलम् ।  
 रजसस्तु फलं दुःखमज्ञानं तमसः फलम् ॥  
 सत्तात् सञ्चयते ज्ञानं रजसो लोभ एव च ।  
 प्रमादमोहौ तमसो भवतोऽज्ञानमेव च ॥

That is, "*Sattvam*, *rajas* and *tamas*, born of Prakriti, bind fast, O mighty-armed, the changeless self to the body. Of these, *sattvam*, which, as pure, manifests knowledge and promotes happiness,

binds the self, O sinless one, through attachment to knowledge and happiness. Learn that *rajas*, whose essence is attraction, arises from desire and attachment, and binds the self, O son of Kuntī, through love for activity. Learn, on the other hand, O descendant of Bharata, that *tamas*, which is born of ignorance, deludes all souls, and binds the self through heedlessness, indolence and sleep. *Sattvam* binds the self to happiness, O descendant of Bharata, *rajas* to activity, while *tamas*, having overclouded wisdom, binds one to heedlessness, that is, indifference to duty. *Sattvam* manifests itself, O Bharata, by overcoming *rajas* and *tamas*, *rajas* by doing the same to *sattvam* and *tamas*, and *tamas* to *sattvam* and *rajas*. When knowledge manifests itself in this body through all organs, know that *sattvam* surely preponderates. On the ascendancy of *rajas*, O chief of the Bharatas, there arise greed, restlessness, enterprise, unceasing activity and desire. When *tamas* increases, O descendant of Kuru, then arise ignorance, inactivity, indifference and delusion. The wise say that of a good action the fruit is *sattvika*, void of stain; of a *rajasika* action, it is misery, and of a *tamasika* action, ignorance. From *sattvam* rises wisdom, from *rajas* greed, from *tamas* rise indifference, delusion and ignorance." (xiv. 5-13, 16, 17.) Let us now see how the author applies this trichotomy

of *gunas* to practical conduct and ascertains by it what is good, middling and bad in it. Whatever leads to the progress of knowledge and the increase of true happiness, being beneficial, feelings and actions characterised by *sattvam* are pronounced by him as excellent. As attachment to finite things and feelings and actions inspired by such attachment proceed from comparative ignorance and lead to misery or only transient happiness, but are nevertheless better than indolence and inaction, they,—the effects of *rajas*—meet with a sort of qualified tolerance or mild condemnation from the author. And, whatever is characterised by ignorance,—namely the effects of *tamas*—indolence and inaction, whatever leads to unmixed misery—if there be any such thing in the world—receives nothing but condemnation from him. I do not know if our author ever came face to face with the truth that, in the economy of Providence, even ignorance and inaction sometimes serve useful ends. God wisely keeps many things hidden from us : we should be most miserable if we knew them. And, even those things that are revealed to us, are revealed only gradually and not too soon. Besides, as to inertia or inaction, that also is sometimes necessary for the preservation of our bodies and minds : continual and unceasing action would ruin us. *Tamas* therefore, the power that hides facts

and truths from us and makes us averse to activity, is not always an evil. However, let us come to details and listen to our author's judgments on some of the most important matters connected with our spiritual and practical life. He speaks first of *sraddhā*, reverence, the basis of all ethical and spiritual life, and of its varying objects accordingly as it is *sāttvika*, *rājasika* or *tāmasika*. The different notions of the object of worship held by men have an internal source. They are dictated by the varying quality of our soul's *sraddhā*—our inward choice of this or that form of character. Our theories, which we often borrow from the intellectual atmosphere around us—are not always a true index of the idea of God we really cherish—of the object of our heart-worship. If a man professes belief in a just, impartial and benevolent God, and yet in his practical life shows a decided preference for unjust, partial, cruel and oppressive acts, there ought to be no mistake about the nature of the deity he really worships. This truth our author expresses thus in his own peculiar language :

यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान् यक्षरक्षांसि राजसाः ।

प्रेतान् भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसाः जनाः ॥

“Those who are endowed with *sattvam* worship the gods ; those with *rajas* the *yakshas* and *rākshasas* (species of demi-gods and giants),

while the others—those who are endowed with *tamaś*—worship the *pretas* and *bhūtas* (species of ghosts and goblins).” xvii. 4.

Our author next speaks of *tapas*, which literally means austerity, but which we may translate as discipline,—any strenuous effort or exercise intended to bring the impulses under the control of reason or to accomplish some other purpose. In various sects of more or less unenlightened devotees, this takes the form of fasting, exposure to heat and cold and such other harmful austerities. Our author's condemnation of such practices is very severe. Of those who practise them, he says :

अग्रास्त्रविहितं घोरं तप्यन्ते ये तपो जनाः ।

दम्भाद्द्वन्द्वकारसंयुक्ताः कामरागाद्यनित्याः ॥

कश्यन्तः शरीरस्य भूतग्राममचेतसः ।

मां चैवान्तः शरीरस्य तान् विद्धासुरनिधयान् ॥

That is,

“Those senseless persons who, led by pride, egotism, lust, desire and rashness, practise dreadful penances not ordained by the scriptures, and torment the elementals in their bodies, and me too living in their hearts,—know them to be possessed of demoniac resolves.” (xvii. 5.)

Again, as to the way in which *tapas* should be practised, he condemns the *rājasik* and the *tāmasik* :



सर्तृकारमानपूजार्थं तपो दम्भेन चैव यत् ।

क्रियते तदिह प्रोक्तं राजसं चक्षुषधुवम् ॥

सूदग्राह्येणात्मनो यत् पीडया क्रियते तपः ।

परस्योत्सादनार्थं वा तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥

“The *tapas*, short-lived in its results, which is practised with pride for the sake of convention, fame and honour, is *rajasik*. And that which is done senselessly for tormenting one’s own self or for the destruction of others, is called *tamasik*.” (xvii. 18, 19.)

Real, *sāttvik tapas*, according to our author, is threefold,—*sāriram*, *vānnmayam* and *mānasam*—those relating to the body, to speech and to the mind. He says :—

देवदिजगत्प्राज्ञपूजनं शोचमाज्ज्वलम् ।

ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शारीरं तप उच्यते ॥

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् ।

स्वप्नयाभ्यासनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥

मनः प्रसादः सोम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः ।

भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत् तपो मानसमुच्यते ॥

“Honouring the gods, the twice-born, teachers and wisemen, purity, straightforwardness, continence and abstinence from doing harm—this is *tapas* relating to the body. Speaking truth and words that cause no pain, but is pleasing and beneficial, and the study of the scriptures,—this is

*tapas* relating to speech. . Cheerfulness of heart, amiability, restraint of tongue, control of thought, and purity of feelings—this is *tapas* relating to the mind.” (xvii. 14-16.)

. The quality of the food we eat is not a matter of indifference to our author. Our taste for different kinds of food is, according to him, dictated by the predominance of *sattvam*, *rajas* or *tamas* in us. And the food thus chosen must favour the growth of the *guna* which lies at the root of our choice. Our author says :

आयुः सत्त्व-बलारोग्य-मुखप्रीति-विवर्द्धनाः ।

रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिरा हृदा आहाराः सात्त्विकप्रियाः ॥

कटुम्लवणातुषण तैक्ष्ण-रूक्ष-विदाहिनः ।

आहारा राजसेष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः ॥

यातयामं गतरंसं पूतिपयुंसितं च यत् ।

उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्यं भीजनं तामसप्रियम् ॥

That is,

“Foods which promote long life, purity, strength, health, happiness and comfort, and which are juicy, cooling, sustaining and delightful, are dear to those who are endowed with *sattvam*. Bitter, sour very hot, astringent, pungent and burning foods, such as bring on pain, grief and sickness, are liked by those who are endowed with *rajas*. Stale, juiceless, and foul-smelled eatables, which have remained cooked for a whole night, those which

are the leavings of a tasted meal and such as are unfit for offerings to the gods, are the chosen food of the *tāmasik*." (XVII.8-10.)

In the same strain our author speaks in his concluding chapter of the *sāttvik*, *rājasik* and *tāmasik* varieties of *jñāna*, *karma*, *kartā*, *buddhi*, *dhṛiti* and *sukham*—knowledge, work, agent, understanding, will and happiness. As what he says about these things does not add much to our knowledge, and as enough has been said of these matters in our previous lectures, I leave them out of consideration here. . . .

Besides the trichotomy of *gunas*, our author employs a dichotomy of *sampat*, inheritance, to ascertain or rather pronounce upon what is good and what is bad. According to him men are born with either of two inheritances, the godly and the demoniac, *daivi sampat* and *āsuri sampat*, and he enumerates the contrasted characteristics of these two classes of men. His description of the latter class is given in a rather Pharisiac tone and ill befits its ascription to the Divine Being. The writer seems to feel hatred rather than pity for the class he describes, and he consigns them to a condition hardly distinguishable from eternal perdition. Compassion for the erring sinner, which seems to me the only defensible feeling that a pious man should feel in such a case,

is here conspicuous by its absence. The very distinction of a godly and an ungodly inheritance seems to me utterly wrong, as all men are creatures of God,—children of the same loving Father. The only valid distinction among them is that of the grown and the ungrown, the more advanced and the less advanced, the elder and the younger children of the Divine Father, and the only feeling for the latter class fit to be ascribed to God seems to be an inexhaustible and long-suffering love that is sure of leading all to perfection, however long and painful the way may be. However, as, in his description of those who are born with a godly inheritance, our author enumerates a number of virtues and duties, I transcribe it here as throwing some light on the subject we are dealing with, namely, practical morals. He says :

अभयं सत्सङ्गं शुद्धिं ज्ञानयोगवावस्थितिः ।  
दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥  
अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपेक्षनम् ।  
दया भूतेषु लोभुषु मादृवं द्वौ रचापलम् ॥  
तेजः क्षमः धृतिः शौचम् अद्रोहो नातिसान्निता ।  
भवन्ति सम्यग् देवीम् अभिजातस्य भारत ॥

“Fearlessness, purity of heart, establishment in *jnāna-yoga*, charity, self-control, worship, study of the scriptures, *tapas*, straightforwardness, abstinence

from harm, truthfulness, absence of anger, self-sacrifice, peace, absence of ill-feeling, kindness to living beings, absence of greed, forgiveness, firmness, cleanliness, abstinence from quarrels, absence of pride,—these qualities, O Bhārata, are to be found in those who are born with the godly inheritance." (XVI. 1-3.)

Here then, we have got all that the author of the *Gītā* has to say on practical morals. His brevity is excused by the fact that he has set a grand ideal before us, an ideal which, if steadily kept in view, will necessarily suggest the details of practical conduct. This ideal is nothing short of *Brāhmi Sthiti* or *Brahma-samsthā*—establishment in God—acting from the Divine standpoint, that is, in the same way as God would act if he were man. Having set forth that ideal in all its aspects, intellectual, emotional and practical, in my previous lectures, and having briefly indicated some of the lines of conduct consistent with that ideal, I have nothing more to say about the *Gītā* scheme of life. In what remains of this lecture, I shall give you a summary of the series of lectures I complete today. It will help those who have heard me all along to remember what they have heard, and give those who have not regularly attended these lectures some idea of the ground we have traversed. Of the twelve lectures comprised in the series, I

have devoted three to Kṛiṣṇa, three to the schools of philosophy which more or less influence the *Gītā* system, one to the treatment of *jñāna*, two to *bhakti* and three to *karma*. In my first lecture, that on "The Origin and Growth of the Krishna Legend," I take up the following questions for discussion, and answer them to the best of my knowledge and ability :—(1) When was the battle of Kurukshetra fought ? (2) When and by whom was the *Mahābhārata*, of which the *Gītā* is a part, composed ? (3) Were Krishna and the Pāṇḍavas mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* in all its various redactions ? (4) If not, into which of them and in what period of Indian history were they introduced ? (5) Was Krishna conceived as an incarnation of God from the beginning ? or (6) Was he deified only by a slow process of development ? Now, following the research of Orientalists, Indian and foreign, I divide the ancient literary history of our country into four periods, each comprising several centuries, namely, the Mantra, subdivided into those of the composition and compilation of the *mantras*, the Brāhmaṇa and Upanishad, the Sūtra, and the Dharmaśāstra, and from the data supplied by the literature of these periods, show that the great war was fought in the second subdivision of the Mantra period, that is, sometime about the twelfth or the thirteenth century before Christ.

Then, as to the date and authorship of the *Mahābhārata*, I show from statements in the poem itself and from other data, that it consists of four strata belonging to different ages and composed by a host of authors, the first stratum going back to the fifth century B. C. and the last coming down to about 300 A. D. As to the date and authorship of the *Gītā*, I show by what I regard as conclusive proof, both positive and negative, that it cannot be the utterance or work of any one belonging to the period of the compilation of the *mantras*, when the great war referred to in it was fought. On the one hand, the poem, which has had so great an influence on our later literature, finds no mention in that of the first three periods of our literary history, namely the Mantra, the Bráhmaṇa and Upanishad and the Sātra. On the other hand, the writer of the *Gītā* is deeply read in and clearly mentions the literature of these periods. It belongs evidently to the early part of the Dharmasāstra period, and its date is either a little before or a little after the beginning of the Christian era. Next, in regard to our third and fourth questions, in which of the four strata of the *Mahābhārata* Kṛishṇā and the Pándavas were introduced, I show that it is very doubtful if they were in the first stratum at all, and that even if they were there, their original characters were greatly altered in the second. According to scholars like

Prof. Hopkins and Mr. R. C. Datta, the Pándavas are mere poetic fictions and took the place of the ancient Bháratas in some stage of the development of the epic. Lastly, in reply to the 5th and 6th questions, those relating to the deification of Krishna, I show that the Krishna of the fully developed *Mahābhārata* is a combination of the non-aryan chief, Krishna, of the Rigveda and the Angiras Kshatriya Krishna of the *Chhândogya Upanishad*, worshipped first as a hero and demi-god, and gradually, in order to serve as a rival figure to Buddha, raised to divinity and made the centre of a Vaishnava propaganda. In no literature before the Dharmaśāstra period is there any mention of an incarnate Deity, the very idea of special incarnations being absent therefrom. It is only in the period referred to, when the necessity for a revival of the Vedic religion, enriched with new ideas and under new methods made necessary by the opposed system, was felt, that books like the *Gītā* and the Atharvan Vaishnava *Upanishads* were written.

In the second lecture, that on "The Krishna of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purānas*," I have given a detailed life of Krishna as it is found in the books regarded as authorities on the subject, namely the *Mahābhārata* with its great supplement, the *Harivāmsa*, the *Vishnu Purāna* and the *Bhāgavata Purāna*. This account of Krishna's



doings will, besides supplying information, enable my hearers to judge how far reasonable is the claim, put forth recently by some of our eminent writers, in favour of Krishna's character as worthy of imitation, taking for granted that it is at all historical.

In my third lecture, that on "The Krishna of the *Bhagavadgita*, I show that the central idea of the *Gita*,—Krishna, the Divine Being, driving the chariot of his disciple, Arjuna, and communicating to him the highest wisdom,—is suggested to the author by the third *valli*, first chapter, of the *Kathopanishad*, which speaks of Reason as our charioteer, the body as the chariot, the senses as horses, and the objective world as the road to be travelled over, and points out the evil of following the senses and the blessedness of following Reason. I then point out that in identifying himself with the Supreme Being and speaking in his name throughout his book, the author of the *Gita* only follows the teaching and example of the *rishis* of the *Upanishads*, as the germ of his doctrine of incarnation lies there, and even the form of teaching adopted by him, for instance in the colloquy between Indra and Prataardana in the *Kaushitaki*. I then explain at some length the Hindu scriptural doctrine of the Logos,—the particular manifestation of the Universal Consciousness in relation

to some individual consciousness, when the latter feels itself filled by and identified with the former and yet not exhausting or fully representing it. The Krishna offered by the *Gita* for our worship is not an individual appearing in a certain time and place, but the Universal Self, whom we see as our own self, free from the limitations of time and space, in moods of deep communion. This is proved by a reference to several passages of the *Gita*, specially its sixth, seventh and eleventh chapters.

In the fourth lecture, that on the "Relation of the *Gita* to the Sankhya Philosophy," I try to explain, as clearly as I can, the fundamental principles of that philosophy, and then show the striking similarity of these principles, to those of the Critical Philosophy of Kant. I also point out how the inconsistencies of both the systems proceed from the same misconceptions and may be, as they have actually been, shown, by the same or similar arguments. I then corroborate my exposition of the Sankhya Philosophy by numerous quotations from Isvara-Krishna's *Kārikā*. Lastly, I show how deeply the teachings of the *Gita* have been influenced by the Sankhya Philosophy and how it tries to reconcile the doctrines of this philosophy with its unmistakable Vedantism. I show that in several points this attempted reconciliation

is not quite successful, but is deeply suggestive and helpful to a true solution of the great problems of thought and life.

In the fifth lecture, that on "The *Gītā* and the Yoga Philosophy," after discussing Patanjali's date, which I fix as the second century B. C., I mention the points in which the Yoga Philosophy differs from the Sankhya, namely its Theism and its system of *Sādhana*. Having stated at some length the nature and grounds of the former, I take up the latter and explain the different *yogāṅgas*, both the outer (*bāhiraṅgaṇi*) and the inner (*antaraṅgaṇi*), quoting at every step from the *Yogasūtras* and occasionally from Bhāṣya's commentary on them. I then go back to the *Upanishads* and show what conceptions of *yoga* prevailed at the time when Sankhya and Yoga were merely forms of *sādhana* and not systems of philosophy independent of the Vedānta. Coming to the *Bhagavadgītā*, I show how far Patanjali's *yogāṅgas* find recognition therein, and explain at some length the more correct and comprehensive system of *yoga* taught by it.

In the sixth lecture, entitled "The *Bhagavadgītā* and the Vedānta Philosophy," I at first comment at some length on the feature that distinguishes the latter as well as the *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā* from the other systems of Hindu Philosophy,

namely the constant appeal which these two systems make to the authority of the Vedas. I explain, with reference to certain utterances of Achárya Sankara, what this appeal to *śabda pramāṇa* means in the case of the Vedantists. It is to them nothing but an appeal to spiritual experience—experience that is possible to all pure-hearted and thoughtful persons. I then give a statement of the views of the two chief schools of the Vedānta Philosophy, Unqualified Monism and Qualified Monism, on such subjects as Creation, the Relation of God to Nature and Man, Liberation and the Way to it &c., and show by quotations from the *Brahma Sūtras* which of these two sets of views are favoured by them. I then point out that the *Gītā*, though agreeing in the main with the latter set of views, namely Qualified Monism, represents a distinct variety of Vedāntism which cannot be quite identified with either of the two chief schools. In its teaching of *bhakti*, the *Gītā* is far in advance of the *Brahma Sūtras*, and in a sense in advance of the *Upanishads* too, which, though teaching love to the Supreme Self, do not bring out clearly and prominently the relation of man to God as of a finite person to an Infinite Person, the one enjoying the infinite love and constant care of the other.

In the seventh lecture, that on "The *Gītā* Ideal of Knowledge compared with the Western

Ideal", I at first show the error of the current view that the philosophical knowledge of religion is not essentially necessary for deep spiritual culture. I then point out the great importance which the author of the *Gita* attaches to such knowledge. The author's view of God and his relation to man and Nature is then set forth—a view which, I point out, is possible only to one who has attained the highest wisdom. Coming to the question of method, I regret the absence in our philosophers of a clear one, such as can convince us, moderns, who are trained under the western system of education. I then proceed to expound at some length the Critical and Dialectic Methods identified with the names of Kant and Hegel, and indicate the fundamental features of the system of Absolute Idealism to which these methods lead. Having shown that most of the principal systems of ancient and modern philosophy, Indian and Western, belong to the first two of the three stages of thought—the Objective, Subjective and Absolute—I point out that the author of the *Bhagavadgita*, though not clearly aware of a method such as the Dialectic, had a wonderfully synthetic imagination, which prevented him from being satisfied with the halting and one-sided systems referred to, and led him to the instinctive grasp of a system of Idealism unifying apparently conflicting but really harmonious

tendencies of thought and life. In this lies his chief claim to the honour which is so universally accorded to him.

In my eighth lecture, that on "The *Gītā* Ideal of *Bhakti* compared with the Vaishnava Ideal," it is at first shewn that the philosophy of unity-in-difference expounded in the seventh lecture is the real basis not only of *bhakti* and *karma*, but also of *jñāna*. Dualism worships an unknown God, a God which is at the same time finite, as he is limited by man and Nature. Such a God cannot command whole-hearted *bhakti*. Any feeling for any supersensuous being is not *bhakti* in the true sense; it is only the awe, reverence and love inspired by the Infinite that deserves the name. On the other hand, Unqualified Monism, by denying the reality of the finite, the *sādhaka* or aspirant, makes the Infinite, the *sādhya*,—the object of aspiration,—meaningless. It leaves no room, not only for *bhakti* or *karma*, but even for *jñāna* as a *sādhya* or system of spiritual culture, for the latter, as much as the two former, implies the distinction of the *sādhya* and the *sādhaka*. After these preliminary remarks, the teaching of the *Upanishads* on cultivating love to God is expounded at some length with reference specially to the *Maitreyī Brāhmaṇa* of the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* and the *Nārada-Saṅkhaśāstra-sambāda* of the *Chhāndogya*. It is

then shown that the *Gītā* teachings on *Bhakti* closely follow the lines laid down in the *Upanishads*. The fundamental teaching of both on the subject is the direct realisation of the Infinite, the intellectual aspect of which is *jñāna* and the emotional aspect *ānanda* or *bhakti*. *Jñāna* and *bhakti* therefore are inseparably related, and all teachings that tend to separate the two and seek the one in exclusion of the other are fundamentally incorrect and injurious. It is then shown that of the two processes of realising the Infinite, the *anyaya* and the *vyatireka*, the *Gītā* follows the latter in its sixth chapter and the former in its eleventh. In its twelfth chapter it commends the worship of the *Saguna* Brahma, taught in the eleventh chapter, as making smooth the way to the *Nirguna*, and points out the difficulties in the way of those who would directly grasp the *Nirguna*. His *saguna* worship is not however the worship of images or finite gods, which, according to him, is not the proper worship of God. In this connection the *Gītā* attitude towards deva-worship and sacrifices is explained at some length. This leads to a discussion of the later development of Vaishnavism—the development heralded by the *Srimadbhāgavatā* and carried on further by such works as the *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa* and the *Nārada Pancharātra* and by still more

recent works like the *Bhaktirasāmṛita Sindhu* and the *Chaitanya-Charitāmṛita*. This later Vaishnava ideal of *bhakti* is expounded at some length, and its fundamental error, the substitution of mythological belief for direct realisation, is pointed out.

In my ninth lecture, entitled "The *Gītā* ideal of *Bhakti* compared with the Christian Ideal," after some preliminary remarks on the historical connection of Christianity and certain phases of Hinduism and the importance of a reverent study of Christianity on the part of us, Hindus, I point out that unlike Krishna, Jesus is, in the main outlines of his life as recorded in the gospel, a historical person, and that these outlines present a truly divine character which is as much a light now as when it first appeared in the history of the world. I then proceed to set forth Christ's teachings on the love of God and man and point out their eminently practical character, and the profound influence exerted by them on human history. I then pass on to the teachings of St. Paul and show how, under an imagery and phraseology very different from those employed in our sacred books, his teachings on sin, atonement, faith, work, love, crucifixion and resurrection are in deep harmony with the *Gītā* teachings on *jñāna*, *bhakti*, *karma*, *Brahma-nirvāṇ* and *Brahma-samsthā*.



Passing on to the teachings of St. John, the Evangelist, I touch upon his teachings on love and then give a somewhat detailed exposition of his introduction to the fourth gospel, which I extracted, but left unexplained, in my fourth lecture. I try to show that the doctrine of the Logos set forth therein is fundamentally the same as that taught in the *Upanishads* and the *Gītā* and that the Christian idea of the Triune God is no more a mystery than the Hindu idea of the Inner Self of all beings, '*Sarva bhūtāntarātmā*,' who makes his one form manifold,—'*Ekam rupam bahudhā yah karoti*.'

In the tenth lecture, that on "The *Gītā* Doctrine of *Karma* or Work," after preliminary remarks on the relation of *jñāna*, *bhakti* and *karma* and on the order of the three *śatkas* of the *Gītā*, I briefly sketch the history of the rise of the extreme followers of *karma* and *jñāna* as parties in the religious community of ancient India. I then speak of early attempts at establishing harmony, *samuchchaya*, between these extreme tendencies and refer to and quote from the *Isopanishad* as such an attempt. But the conflict thickened, the the sects referred to grew into regular schools of philosophy, and more elaborate attempts became necessary to combat them. The *Gītā* is the most successful of these attempts. At first it grapples

with the *karma-kāṇdis*, the followers of Jaimini, to whom there is no higher ideal than the life of ceremonial practices and their worldly and other-worldly results. It shows that there are higher truths than these sectaries know of and higher motives of *karma* than they appeal to. On entering this higher sphere, however, our author feels the power of the logic of the opposite school, the Sankhya Philosophy, and is so far led away by it as to pronounce the Self as essentially inactive, a doctrine which cuts down the roots of his doctrine of *karma*. His Vedantism and his strong common sense, however, come to his rescue and he propounds the doctrine of an ever-active God and those of *nishkāma karma* and *Brahmārpana*, which constitute his refutation of the opponents of *karma*,—the Sankhyas and the Māyāvādi ascetics.

In the eleventh lecture, that on "The Ethical Ideal of the *Bhagavadgītā*," I take up again the question of the relation of *jñāna* and *karma* and show by an analysis of knowledge the unreasonableness of the doctrine of an inactive self, the fundamental error of the Sankhya. I show that knowledge in all its forms maintains itself by ceaseless activity, and that the self, both in its absolute and relative forms, is essentially active and purposive. Every moment of our life we are in the hands of an ever-active Person who, though he has no

desires for himself, being eternally perfect, is inspired with an inexhaustible desire for the perfection of his creation. This leads to a discussion of the *Gītā* doctrine of *niskāma karma*, desireless or disinterested work, in the course of which it is shown in what sense the *yogin* who has attained unity with God, has, and in what sense he has not, desires. It is shown that the characteristics which the *Gītā* gives of a *sthitaprajña* person, a person who is established in wisdom, indicate an ideal of character in which our appetites and propensities, instead of being starved or suppressed as in the ascetic scheme, undergo a process of purification and become parts of the all-comprehensive desire of union with God. God being all-in-all, the abandonment of desire for finite things means only abandoning their pursuit as objects independent of him. As parts or manifestations of him, the desire for them is a part of love to God. This leads to the exposition of the doctrine of *Brahmaṛpanam*, giving over all things to God, and of *karma* as *yajna*,—doing all things in the spirit of divine worship. In expounding these doctrines I feel that I have reached the greatest height of the teachings of the *Gītā*, and with a trembling hand I humbly submit my exposition to your judgment, such judgment as you may pass upon it in the light of your spiritual experiences.

My present lecture, (on "The *Gītā* System of Practical Morals") the twelfth and last of the series, is, as you see, rather supplementary. It has enumerated a number of practical duties consistent with the ideal of conduct set forth in the previous lectures and given a brief summary of all the lectures of the series.

And now my task is fully done—the solemn and arduous task that has occupied me, amidst many distractions and vicissitudes, nearly two years. I have no words to express adequately my feeling of indebtedness to that noble and enlightened patron of religion and philosophy, Raja Venkatakumara Mahipati Surya Rao of Pithapuram, whose kindness has enabled me to spend so many hours in devout study and meditation and to be of some service, however humble, to my fellow-beings. I also thank, with all my heart, my brethren in faith, the office-bearers and members of the Theological Society, and the Executive Committee of the Sādhāran Brāhmin Samāj, for helping me in delivering these lectures. No less heartily, do I thank you, my hearers, for giving me a patient and respectful hearing. My labours, by God's grace, are now at an end. They will be amply rewarded if they help even a few souls to appreciate and follow the saving truths of the *Bhagavadgītā*, truths which are surely the teaching

of God himself, and to avoid its errors—the result of human ignorance and limitation. I shall feel rewarded even if I have succeeded in convincing you of this single truth, that the real Kurukshetra is this our life, that this our body is a chariot drawn by the senses and the appetites, that the rider and warrior, Arjuna, is none but our own self, and that the real Krishna, as distinct from the epic or mythical, is the Supreme Being himself. If you feel all this, you will also feel with Sanjaya, who exclaims in the last sloka of the *Gītā*, with which I fitly close these lectures:

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।

तत्र श्रीविजयो भूति भ्रूवा नीति मतिर्मम ॥

I believe that wherever there is Krishna, the ideal of *yoga*, and wherever there is Pārtha, the archer, there are prosperity, success, happiness and constant, inviolable Law.

THE END.





